UPLAND COLLEGE LIBRARY
UPLAND, CALIFORNIA

THE WRITING AND READING OF VERSE

THE WRITING AND READING OF VERSE

BY

C. E. ANDREWS, M.A., PH.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK LONDON

1925

WITHDRAWN

Copyright, 1918, by
D. Appleton and Company

UPLAND COLLEGE LIBRARY
UPLAND, CALIFORNIA
22988

808.1
A565
W

Printed in the United States of America

TO
"FATHER" TINKER

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/writingreadingof0000cean_i6o0

"For the artist in verse there is no law, the perception and love of beauty constitute the whole outfit; and what is herein set forth is to be taken merely as enlarging that perception and exalting that love."

—Sidney Lanier.

PREFACE

No field of literary study has produced so many widely different theories and schools as that of versification. There are stress theories, syllabic theories, quantitative theories, "long and short" theories, "monopressure" theories, "rhythm-wave" theories, time part theories, historical theories, and so on, "in wandering mazes lost." This is

> A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
> Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
> Where armies whole have sunk.

Metrists hold to their prosodic prejudices with the tenacity of old-time theologians, and scholars will die at the stake for a definition.

The reason for these puzzling differences in point of view is the extreme subtlety and complexity of the phenomena of poetry. The elements involved are the meanings and the connotations of words; the accents and the movement of speech phrases; the number and the quality of syllables; their differences in intensity, duration, and pitch; the patterns and pauses of rhythm and meter; and finally, the personal equation of different readers of verse. These numerous elements now combine their forces and produce one effect, and now struggle together and create another, in ways apparently so inconsistent that rational principles are hard to discover. Each metrist finds one of these elements the basic principle upon which verse depends, and all the others subordinate in varying degrees; and like the philosopher and the theologian, each theorist makes his partial truth the whole. So the ordinary reader of poetry, perplexed by prosodic wars, asserts with a fine air of distinction that he does not find any principles of metrics

necessary to an appreciation of poetry, but that he does know what he likes!

Now I wish I might claim that my book is superior to any of its predecessors in that it presents all the elements of poetry in their true relation, and that in the future the world may set its mind to rest on metrical matters; but, unfortunately, I do not feel this way about it. I merely claim that it presents a possible, and I hope not too complicated, explanation of the more important phenomena of verse, and that the plan has a few practical advantages over other systems.

The point of view is an application of the theory, widely accepted since the publication of Sidney Lanier's *Science of English Verse*, that the rhythm of both music and verse depends upon an equality of time divisions. This principle is very commonly stated at the beginning of books on meter, but there have been very few attempts to develop a consistent prosody from it. The advantages of this approach to the subject are that it brings the analysis of verse into some relation to the way in which verse is written, and helps one to gain a greater pleasure in reading it by training one's ear to appreciate subtleties of rhythm. The emphasis through the book is placed upon the appeal of verse to the ear.

A consideration of verse as fundamentally composed of anapests, pyrrhics, amphibrachs, etc., may be adequate and convenient for a metrist, but complicated and troublesome for a student. For example, he feels puzzled by an explanation of Shelley's line,

When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,

as a succession of feet, the first of which is the normal iambus, and the rest all substitutions—pyrrhic, spondee, anapest, trochee, *i. e.*

When night | makes a | weird sound | of its own | stillness.

Aside from the fact that he does not see why this explains how the line can be rhythmical, he may wonder why this particular scansion should be better than,

When night | makes a | weird sound | of its | own stillness,

or,

When night | makes a weird | sound of | its own | stillness.

College students show a pardonable repugnance to elaborate technicalities; it is hard to make them feel a vital interest in a distinction between the acephalous iambic heptasyllable and the trochaic tetrameter catalectic.

An analysis of verse which cultivates an ear for rhythm rather than a sense of ingenuity is not only more simple and more logical, but also more helpful in the practice of verse writing. The student poet commonly goes through three stages. First he finds that poetic rhythm seems to be an arrangement of words with an emphasis on every other syllable or every third syllable. He writes on this principle until someone tells him to stop, or until he discovers for himself that there is such a thing as monotony. In his next stage (if he ever gets beyond the first) he finds that rhythms may be varied in innumerable ways. His reaction against the Mary-had-a-little-lamb kind of verse leads him to harsh and uncouth effects, and he scorns all curbs that may restrain the flight of Pegasus. Then, finally, unless he stops here as a "vers librist," he steers a middle course that avoids both the monotony of his first manner and the formless freedom of his second. Now the advantage which the young versifier gains from thinking in terms of musical equivalence is that he may skip the stage of rigidly monotonous composition. He begins to compose with too free a rhythm; but by studying his own efforts in comparison with the work of accepted poets, he may develop an ear for the finer variations, and may then achieve an

interesting verse technique of his own. It is obviously easier to smooth out verse that is too rough than to introduce pleasing variety into a dull and unvaried rhythm. This is the practical advantage which may be claimed for an analysis of verse on the principle of a time equivalence like that recognized in music.

Part One of the book deals, in a general way, with the theory of verse, the principles of meter, rhythm, movement, phrasing, etc. The first four or five chapters will give the general student sufficient introduction to the elements of versification, without his considering the chapters on rime and melody. He may refer to the rest of the book merely for the definitions of special types of verse. *Part Two* is intended as a help to the more advanced student of composition who is interested in trying the technique of the different verse forms, or for the student who wishes to become a more capable critic of poetry.

I wish to acknowledge special indebtedness to three previous studies in verse which, more than others, have helped me in forming my own point of view—Professor T. S. Omond's *Study of Meter*, Professor C. M. Lewis' *English Versification*, and M. Verrier's *Principes de la Métrique Anglaise*. To Mr. Brian Hooker, whose three volumes of poetry show that he can not only analyze verse but can also write it, I am grateful for the privilege of reading in manuscript his forthcoming book on meter. My colleague, Professor Milton Percival, and my brother, Mr. F. Sturgis Andrews, have given me valuable assistance by their encouragement and criticism. But more than to anyone else I owe a debt to my friend, Professor Charles W. Cobb of Amherst, before whose hospitable fire I have smoked many a pipe and discussed for hours at a time, his theories, my own theories, and everybody else's theories of rhythm—and, in fact, theories of most things in the world.

C. E. Andrews

Columbus, Ohio.

CONTENTS

PART I

PRINCIPLES OF VERSE

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Preliminary	3
II.	Meter—Stress—Accent	6
III.	Scansion	19
IV.	Verse-Pattern—Duple and Triple Rhythm	32
V.	Prose and Verse	49
VI.	Movement—Phrasing	69
VII.	Rime	82
VIII.	Melody or Tone-Color	96

PART II

TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL VERSE FORMS

IX.	Stanza Forms	139
X.	Tetrameter Couplet	162
XI.	Pentameter Line—Heroic Couplet	175
XII.	Blank Verse	196
XIII.	Sonnet	222
XIV.	Ode	230
XV.	French Forms	247

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVI.	Trochaic Verse	266
XVII.	Triple Rhythm	275
XVIII.	Duple-Triple Rhythms	296
XIX.	Free Verse or Vers Libre	316

PART I

PRINCIPLES OF VERSE

CHAPTER I

Preliminary

There are people, even intelligent people, who read verse so that it sounds like prose with obtruding rimes; the meaning is all they care about. I have heard people read even their own verses in this way, although the verses themselves had rhythmic possibilities. Other readers completely sacrifice the meaning of the words to satisfy a too mechanical sense of rhythm. They read such lines as these from Shelley's *Alastor* with a rigid alternation of emphasis,

> And wásted fór fond lóve of hís wild éyes.
> In thé deaf aír to thé blind eárth and heáven.

They may find these lines agreeable, or they may call them bad verse, but they do not question the correctness of their reading. They are willing, if necessary, to change the emphasis on the same word when it occurs in two successive lines, as in,

> I knów not aúght that Béatríce desígned,
> Nor dó I thínk she désigned ánything.
> (Shelley: *Cenci*, II, i.)

This wrenching of accent from what would be normal in prose they call "poetic license." A third class of readers preserve a distinct feeling of rhythm in such lines, and yet give the words their usual accents. They read,

> And wásted for fónd lóve of his wíld éyes.
> In the deáf aír to the blínd eárth and heáven.
> Nor dó I thínk she desígned ánything.

The writer on versification commonly ignores these differences among readers, dogmatically asserts what he thinks the only correct reading for a given line, and formulates his theories of verse accordingly. The intention of the poet might be taken as the criterion, but how shall we be sure of this intention? Each reader thinks that he himself is interpreting it. Such questions must be matters of taste; people with an appreciation of literature are to be found among all three classes of readers just mentioned.

A dogmatic attitude in matters of taste is prejudicial to any scientific study. Our first approach to the study of verse should be scientific; only when we have agreed on certain fundamentals can we profitably discuss differences in taste. Verse depends upon the ear, not the eye; therefore it must be read before it can be discussed.[1] Let our first point of view be that anyone may read verse as he will, and that the task of the student is to observe and record how verse has been read. Taste, of course, must determine good reading, but the principles of versification should hold for any reading. The student should train his ear to hear accurately both his own and other people's rendering of a passage. Whenever a reading is marked in the following pages it is presented as a possible one—that which the author prefers—but not the only correct one.

Another preliminary point to be mentioned is the necessity for agreement in the use of terms. Since there is an unfortunate confusion of meaning over frequently used words like rhythm, meter, stress, accent, etc., the student must keep his discussions clear by adopting one definition for each and strictly adhering to it. In a recent article on vers libre occurred the statement that fixed verse depended upon *rhythm* and free verse upon *cadence*, but no definition was given for either of these words, which are sometimes used synonymously. The mathematician demands that

[1] *See* C. W. Cobb: "A Scientific Basis for Metrics," *Modern Language Notes*, May, 1913; and Verrier: *Principes de la Métrique Anglaise*, I, 118.

his reader accept certain assumptions and agree to certain definitions throughout a given discussion; you cannot logically follow his argument unless you accept his meaning of the terms *number*, *straight line*, or *parallelopipedon*. Metrical discussions to be at all fruitful require a similar agreement on the meaning of terms like *stress*, *accent*, or *foot*, throughout the same argument.

CHAPTER II

Meter—Stress—Accent

Most readers will agree that the first obvious difference between verse and prose is that verse is divided into certain units called lines, and that these lines must be "metrical." It is the definition of "metrical" that causes disagreement. Let us try to form a definition which may be one basis for a study and classification of verse.

Suppose we grant that the following indicates a possible metrical reading of the opening lines of *Henry IV, Part I:*

> So sháken ás we áre so wán with cáre
> Fínd we a tíme for fríghted peáce to pánt
> And breáthe short-wínded áccents of néw bróils
> To bé comménc'd in stránds afár remóte.
> . . . . . .
> No móre shall trénching wár chánnel her fiélds . . .

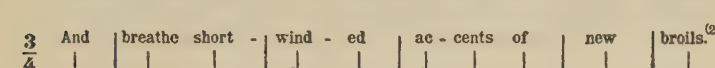
The first and fourth lines might be explained as metrical because every other syllable receives emphasis, but this will not explain why the second, third and fifth, when read as indicated, are also metrical. Furthermore, the following lines from Shelley and Tennyson, though they seem quite different in the distribution of emphasis from the first quoted above, occur in contexts of the same kind of verse:

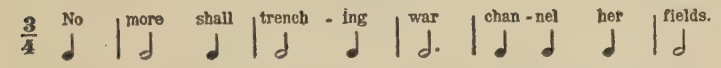
> When níght makes a weírd soúnd of its ówn stíllness.
> (Shelley: *Alastor.*)
>
> The líttle ínnocent soúl flítted awáy.
> (Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

One listening to the indicated metrical reading of the passage from *Henry IV* can detect a huddling of the syllables "*Find we a,*" "*accents of,*" and "*channel her*" and also a

slight lengthening of "*new*" and "*war.*" The reader seems to jump from one point of emphasis to the next at something approaching equal intervals of time, and to let all syllables between take care of themselves. The lines of verse when read metrically are divided into equal time parts which correspond to the bars of a phrase in music. That is, both verse and music primarily depend upon rhythm.[1] To make the parallel between verse and music clearer we may represent by musical notation one possible reading of the first line quoted above. The bars, as in written music, precede the emphatic syllables.

Possible readings of the less regular lines might be these:

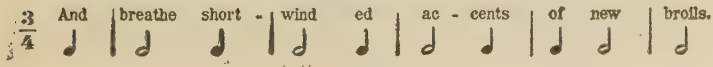




We may carry the parallel further by reading the lines to the rhythm of a metronome, the ticks of which occur at exactly equal intervals of time. The reading will sound stiff and expressionless, but it will still satisfy us as "metrical." And we must remember that playing a musical instrument in the unmodified tempo of the metronome would have as awkwardly stiff an effect as our experiment with verse. Expression in good reading or in good playing may

[1] "Rhythm is the harmonious repetition of certain fixed sound relations, time being the basis, just as in dancing or music. . . ." (Gummere: *Poetics*, p. 136.)

[2] Of course some readers may prefer:



necessitate frequent slight departures from an exact equality of time divisions, but the departures must not be so considerable as to destroy the feeling that rhythm is present. The ear is a very imperfect instrument, and our sense of rhythm is satisfied if the phenomena marking the rhythm occur at only sensibly equal intervals of time.[3] In fact, the sophisticated ear finds greater pleasure in these slight variations, just as the tempo of a virtuoso subtly playing with individuality about a norm of exact rhythm pleases us much more than the inevitable rhythmic accuracy of the pianola. "In a fine oriental rug the hand-made, slightly irregular ornament and intentionally varied symmetry are more interesting and more beautiful than the dead mechanical precision of a machine-woven pattern; but a geometrically perfect pattern may be said to lie at the basis of the Persian weaver's design. So in verse there is an exact pattern underneath, to which the reader approximates, now more closely, now less, as the phonetic character of the words or the requirements of sense and expression permit or demand."[4]

A possible way, then, of explaining the basis of verse is to say that *a line is metrical when it is divided into sensibly equal time parts.* This definition assumes a unit called a line, which does not exist in prose. There is, after all,

[3] The margin of inaccuracy in the perception of the different senses is one of the common subjects for experiment in psychology. "It is a familiar condition that two stimuli must differ at least by a minimal amount, in order that we may become aware of their differences. . . . For lifted weights it is, we shall see, about one-thirtieth. For pressure on the finger-tip it has been found to be about one-twentieth, for brightness of light about one-hundredth, and for intensities of noise, about one-third; two sounds of different loudness can just be distinguished as different, provided that the intensity of one is greater by about one-third than that of the other." C. S. Myers, *A Text-book of Experimental Psychology*, 1909, pp. 255-6.

[4] T. D. Goodell: *Chapters on Greek Metric*, p. 82. The chapter on "Rhythm and Language" is an admirable discussion of the subject of rhythm in general.

much to be said for the popular distinction that each line in verse begins with a capital but in prose does not. The sentence you are reading now, for instance, may be divided easily into verse of equal line lengths, each with its five stresses, thus:

> The séntence yóu are reáding nów, for ínstance
> May bé divíded eásily ínto vérse
> Of équal líne lengths, eách with its fíve strésses.

But you were not conscious of any such divisions when you read the sentence first. Read as prose it has a very different sound from when read as verse. For one thing, each group of words which forms a line when read as verse, your prose reading probably divided into a different number of time parts, so that the groups could not be recognized as three units of the same metrical form. A more detailed discussion of the differences between prose and verse will be taken up later.[5]

Further support for the definition at which we have arrived —a line is metrical when divided into sensibly equal time parts—may be found in the exhaustive researches of M. Verrier and other psychologists, who have shown by actual measurement that the time parts of verse are much more nearly equal than those of singing.[6] Then, too, many of the great makers of poetry have shown by the chanting manner, often monotonous, of their own recitations that they felt a musical rhythm in verse as its fundamental quality. There is an agreement of evidence that this was characteristic of Tennyson's and Poe's reading; Scott composed verses on horseback, and Wordsworth marked his rhythm by beating the Cumberland hills with his cane. The principle is likewise borne out by Professor Gummere's

---

[5] *See* Chapter 4.

[6] *Principes de la Métrique Anglaise*, III, 241. M. Verrier finds this true of even the most irregular verse compared with the most regular songs sung to a single syllable.

theory of the origin of poetry in the simple rhythmical exclamations that help keep the time in concerted labor, and in the rude half-shout, half-song accompanying communal tribal dances.[7]

This equality of time divisions is not only the basis of Old and Modern English verse, but foreign investigations have shown that it is the principle underlying French and German[8] as well. The differences between the verse of one period and another, or of one language and another, are matters of arbitrary convention, or of ornament. Old English verse, for example, has, in general, four time parts to the line, which has a pause in the middle, and is embellished with alliteration, *e. g.*

Hlóh and | hlýdde, | hlýnede and | dýnede.

The heroic couplet in the age of Pope has normally five time parts to the line, which is strictly limited to ten syllables, *e. g.*

| Plánets and | stárs run | láwless | throúgh the | ský.

The French classical alexandrine has also a fixed requirement of syllables, twelve, variously distributed among four, or occasionally three, time divisions, *e. g.*

Je veúx, | sans que la mórt | óse | me secourír,
Toujours aimér, | toujours souffrír, | toujours mourír.

In Latin verse the principle of musical equivalence is evident from the quantitative relation of the syllables, one "long" being a substitute for two "shorts" in the hexameter line,[9] *e. g.*

[7] *Beginnings of Poetry*, Ch. 2. *See also* T. D. Goodell: *op. cit.*, pp. 67 ff.

[8] M. Grammont: *Le Vers Français*, Paris, 1904; *Petit Traité de Poesie Française*, Paris, 1908; and F. Saran, *Deutsche Verslehre*, Munich, 1907.

[9] There is the same time equivalence in classical verses which allows a spondee, — —, or a dactyl, — ⏑ ⏑, to be substituted for a trochee, — ⏑; this is recognized by giving separate names to these substituted feet, "irrational spondee," "cyclic dactyl."

— ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — — | — — | — ⏑ ⏑ | — —
Arma vi- | rumque ca- | no Troi- | ae qui | primus ab | oris.

All these different kinds of verse depend primarily upon the equality of time measures, but the verse of each language has made more prominent its secondary characteristics. The number of syllables, the grouping of them, or their phonetic quality, constitute different conventions, which rest upon the basis of musical equivalence.

If the equality of time divisions is to be the principle upon which our study of meter depends, we must next explain how this equality makes itself perceptible. In music the division of the measures is marked by an emphasis on the first beat, or by some change in the melody or the harmony which may accompany the rhythm. In classical verse the rhythm is marked by regular changes in the quantity of the syllables; in French verse by a slight emphasis; and in German and English usually by a strong emphasis.

A metrical reading of the line,

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
(Gray: *Elegy*.)

divides it into time parts by the reader's emphasis of syllables made important by the sense of the passage. In this line there are five syllables which demand emphasis, but in the line,

The applause of listening senates to command,

there are but four which would be emphasized in prose reading. Both these lines, however, may be read as units of the same form—each divided into five time parts. But in the second line, the time between the emphasis in *sénates* and the emphasis in *commánd* is twice that between any other two successive important syllables in the line. Some readers make it clear that there are two time divisions here by putting a slight emphasis on the insignificant syllable

to; others, by giving this syllable a somewhat greater time value than in the normal pronunciation of it, but not giving it any special force of voice; and still other readers give all the syllables their normal value but fill up the time by a slight pause (like a rest in music) after the word *senates.* All three read the line as pentameter. Such a condition we may liken to a man walking along beside a fence and touching successively and rhythmically all the pickets, and instinctively making a gesture at a place where one picket may happen to be broken.

Another fact about emphasis in verse may be observed in the line,

Depart again: here, here will I remain,

in which we may read five time parts, but six emphatic syllables. In fact, we may emphasize the first *here* stronger than any other syllable and still read five time parts to the accompaniment of a metronome.[10]

The two phenomena just considered indicate that there may be a conflict between the ideal metrical scheme of a verse passage and the grammatical or sense emphasis of the words which compose it. Lines of perfect regularity like,

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

in which probably all readers will agree as to which five syllables should be emphasized, we may consider ideal examples of their type. Many such lines in succession would have a monotonous effect, and actually occur less often in good verse than lines like,

The applause of listening senates to command,

or,

Depart again: here, here will I remain,

[10] Compare the arbitrary accentuation possible anywhere in a measure in music, for the sake of a special effect in interpretation.

where there is clearly a struggle between the two forces, meter and sense. In the former line, the natural sense reading must yield to the requirement of the rhythm if the line is to be read in five time parts; in the latter, the meaning will incline the reader to make the rhythm slightly concede. It is the nice balance and adjustment of these two forces that constitute a large part of the skill in making or in reading verses. In order to study this conflict further, we may find it convenient to use the following definitions:

Emphasis is any kind of prominence given to a syllable.[11] It may be a special force of voice, or it may be a slight lengthening of a syllable[12] (more than in the usual pronunciation of it), like a slight prolongation of the first note of a measure to mark the rhythm in organ playing, where special force is impossible. Emphasis also may be subjective; we may instinctively feel some prominence in a syllable because we expect it.

Stress is metrical emphasis.

Accent is sense emphasis.

When these do not coincide throughout a line we have:

Light Stress (marked `), emphasis required by meter, but not by sense, or,

Extra Accent (marked ^), emphasis required by sense but not by meter.

A Foot is the time between two stresses, or one of the equal time parts. A *Dimeter* is a line of two feet; *Trimeter*, one of three feet; *Tetrameter*, four; *Pentameter*, five; *Hexameter*, six; *Heptameter*, seven; *Octameter*, eight.

A stress is called "light" if it falls on an article, prep-

[11] These definitions apply either to the point of view of the reader or to that of the listener.

[12] This lengthening of a syllable, "quantity," is, of course, the means of dividing the time parts in classical verse. The Romans and Greeks evidently had a much subtler sense of the quantity of syllables than we have. To read the experimental imitations of classical verse in English, by Tennyson, Clough and Robert Bridges, requires one to cultivate an ear for quantity and almost to obliterate accent.

osition, pronoun, or auxiliary verb, unimportant in the reader's idea of the sense of the passage, or on an unaccented syllable of a polysyllabic word. It may occur anywhere in a line:

> And ìn luxúrious cíties whére the noíse.
> (Milton: *Paradise Lost*, I, 498.)
> Nor sérved it tò reláx their sérried fíles.
> (*Ibid.*, VI, 599.)
> Sole reígning hólds the týrannỳ of heáven.
> (*Ibid*, I, 124.)
> No líght; but ráther dárkness visiblè.
> (*Ibid.*, I, 63.)

Light stresses may occur in more than one place in the same line:

> To máke a vírtue òf necéssitỳ.
> (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, i, 62.)
> His mínistèrs of véngeance ànd pursuít.
> (*Ibid.*, I, 170.)
> The thúnder òf the trúmpets òf the níght.
> (Swinburne: *Laus Veneris.*)
> To séttle thè succéssion òf the Státe.

These last three lines would naturally be read as trimeter (*i. e.*, divided into three time parts by the three full stresses) did they not occur in a context of pentameter. When there are but two full stresses in a line—as is the case with

> A dèsolátion, à simplícitỳ.
> (Wordsworth: *Prelude.*)
> Ìn the ecónomy òf vitálitỳ,
> (Hardy: *Dynasts*, V, iv.)

and

> That àppertaín untò a búriàl,
> (*Much Ado About Nothing.*)

—the difference between the prose reading of the words and the very artificial verse reading is so conspicuous that the lines sound thin and weak.

There are a few unusual lines in Shakespeare in which one stress is completely wanting, *e. g.*

Shall lóse me. ( ) Whát in a tówn of wár.
(*Othello*, II, iii.)

and

With thís thin hélm. ( ) Mine énemy's dóg.
(*King Lear*, IV, vii.)

If these lines are not read simply as tetrameter (in a context of pentameters) they may be considered as cases in which the sense of rhythm is satisfied by an interval of silence, like a rest in music, coming at the grammatical pause. In one case a whole time part is filled with silence; in the other, only a portion of a time part.[13]

Examples of extra accent are:

Foôl! Foól! repeáted hé while his eýes stíll.
(Keats: *Endymion.*)

Keên, crúel, pérceant, stínging, shé as wéll.
(*Ibid.*)

And tén lôw wórds ôft creép in óne dûll líne.
(Pope: *Essay on Criticism.*)

O'er bóg or steép, through straít, roûgh dénse, or ráre,
With heád, hânds, wíngs, or feét pursúes his wáy.
(Milton: *Paradise Lost*, II, 948.)

Rôcks, cáves, lâkes, féns, bôgs, déns and shádes of deáth.
(*Ibid.*, II, 620.)

The line,

[13] The dramatic emotion of the speakers in both these passages might be the reason for the break in the verse. For other examples *see* R. M. Alden: *English Verse*, p. 20.

Spoûse! Síster! Ángel! Pílot òf the fáte,
(Shelley: *Epipsychidion.*)

may be read, as indicated, with five stresses and five accents, not all coincident.

Again, in this line from Arnold's *Scholar Gipsy,*

Thou hádst *ône* aím, *ône* búsiness, ône desíre,

if it is read as indicated, the first two occurrences of *one* (Italicized by the poet himself) are cases of extra accent, but in the third, accent and stress coincide. Though all three may receive the same force of voice in reading, with the first two it is emphasis within the time part, and with the third, emphasis that marks the time division.

For verse to be read well the time parts should be distributed so that the stresses coincide as far as possible with the sense accents. For instance,

At ónce I sáw him fár on the greát seá,
(Tennyson: *Holy Grail.*)

is—I think most people will admit—a more effective reading than,

At ónce I sáw him fár on thè great seá;

though both are metrical, and both, of course, are allowable according to the principle of free choice in reading stated at the beginning of this book. Occasionally, in reading verse with archaic affectations like that of the Pre-Raphaelites, stress and accent cannot be made to coincide effectively in accordance with modern pronunciation, as:

Upòn my réd robe, stránge in thè twilìght
(Morris: *Arthur's Tomb.*)

Now só it chánced upòn a Máy Mornìng
(Morris: *Proud King.*)

Stoóp through the spráy of sóme sweet life-fountain.[14]
(Rossetti: *House of Life.*)

Such a wrenching of accents, which has usually been avoided by the best poets, apparently gave a quaint pleasure to Morris and Rossetti. Another similar point to be noted in reading is that Shakespeare seems to have shifted the accent of certain dissyllabic words according to the requirements of his meter, *e. g.*

He is compléte in feature and in mind
(*Two Gentlemen of Verona,* II, iv.)

O maid of grace and cómplete majesty
(*Love's Labors Lost,* I, i.)

Most of the words, however, in which this change is said to occur, can be read with the same accent in the different lines in which they happen, unless the reader tries to make regular and unvaried lines of them all In the two following cases, for instance,

An extreme fear can neither fight nor fly.
(*Lucrece,* 230.)
To qualify the fire's extreme rage.
(*Two Gentlemen of Verona,* II, vii.)

we may read éxtreme or extréme consistently in both lines and still divide them satisfactorily, into five equal time parts. Isn't it better, then, to give all such words the modern accent, except where this makes a distinctly awkward reading? [15]

[14] To read Máy Mórning or life foúntain would sound very awkward to most of us, because English poets, for some reason, have not given this particular rhythmical ending to a line; therefore our ears are not accustomed to it.

[15] Nearly all the cases of "recession of accent" given in Robert Bridges' *Milton's Prosody* (p. 55) can be read with agreeable effect without altering the modern prose accent.

Professor Bright (Bright and Miller: *English Versification*) has a theory

In general, if the poet has done his work well, the reader will find that giving the words in verse their normal sense accent, will bring out a division of the lines into approximately equal time parts.

---

which explains this accentual shifting, as well as what I have alluded to as a conscious effect of archaism with the Pre-Raphaelites, as survivals, in verse, of earlier pronunciation. For instance, words of French origin when first introduced into English were accented on the last syllable. When, in the development of the language, the accent of these words shifted in ordinary speech, poets had their choice of continuing the old or adopting the new form, wherever one or the other pleased them better. This theory, only a part of which I have explained, is too comprehensive. It very well explains the Shakespearian usage I have just mentioned, but why carry it so far as to insist on our reading,

Who knows on whom fortúne would then have smiled,
(*Henry IV*, Part II, iv.)

or

Is súccess still attendant on desert?
(Browning: *Ring and Book*.)

Furthermore, the lines from Rossetti and Morris quoted above are not cases of accentual shifting that are common in modern verse, but obviously attempts to add a flavor of Chaucer or the ballads.

When Chaucer wrote,

And whán that hé was slaýn in thís manére,
(*Troilus*, II.)

or,

And báthĕd évery veýne in swích licoúr,
(*Canterbury Tales Prologue*.)

he was giving manner and liquor their usual prose accent in his time. But Twilight and Morníng are not real archaisms, either consciously or unconsciously surviving, but merely effects that suggest the freedom of ballad versification, or possibly the way Chaucer sounds to a modern reader. When accentual shifts occur in the ballads, it is safe to consider that the unsophisticated ear of the author or listener was willing to sacrifice sense to obey them, whenever this made versifying easier. In the ballad *King Henry*, lády and ladý both occur, though I believe there is no reason to think that the second pronunciation was ever used outside of verse.

Says, "lády, hap your lingean."
"An what meat's in this house ladý."

CHAPTER III

Scansion

Scansion is a means of indicating for the purpose of study the division of verse into feet. The scansion of a line should not differ from the natural verse reading of it except in exaggerating the special characteristics of that reading. That a scansion should be an indication or a record of somebody's reading; or, conversely, that any good reading is merely a refinement of scansion, is a principle to which the method of this book adheres.

The student should listen carefully to his own reading and to that of others and learn to detect and mark quickly the points at which the dividing stresses occur.[1] According to the conclusions of the psychologists the stress occurs on the attack of the vowel.[2] Strictly then, following the musical analogy of placing the bar before each stress, a line would be divided thus:

S- | ouls of p- | oets d- | ead and g- | one,

or,

The c- | urfew t- | olls the kn- | ell of p- | arting d- | ay,

but practically it is more convenient to include with the vowels the consonants which belong in the same syllable, thus:

| Souls of | poets | dead and | gone.

or,

[1] A good exercise for a class is to have one student read verses written on a blackboard, another to mark the division of the verses as read, a third to read them as the second student has marked them, and the rest of the class to criticise the work of all three.

[2] *See also* T. D. Goodell: *op. cit.*, p. 88.

The | curfew | tolls the | knell of | parting | day.

Placing the bar after the stress, thus—

Souls | of po- | ets dead | and gone | ,

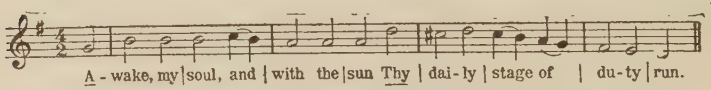
or,

The cur- | few tolls | the knell | of par- | ting day |

—is quite as accurate an indication of a time part division, but the analogy to musical notation, which calls the note that is accented, the first one of a measure, inclines some prosodists to make a foot in verse always begin with a stressed syllable.[3]

In the scansions marked throughout the rest of the book we shall understand that a bar placed before a syllable indicates that the reading in question puts a stress on that syllable.

The word *The*, set off at the beginning of the line just scanned in this way, has as its parallel in music the upbeat that very often begins a piece, as, for instance, in the following hymn:[4]



[3] For verse notation to be as consistent as musical, all feet must be alike in having the stress either always at the beginning or always at the end. If we made them different for different kinds of verse, we should have to use stress marks as well as bars to show the difference between | *soúls of* | and | *The cúr-* | ; furthermore we should be hopelessly confused in considering scansions like,

Hánds that the ród of émpire might have swáyed,

or,

The lóne coúch of his èverlásting sleép,

and still hold to the definition of foot given in the last chapter. The reasons for not distinguishing separate kinds of *feet* in iambic and trochaic verse will be found in Chapter VI.

[4] This is technically called anacrusis.

Again, just as in music a piece may begin with two unaccented notes, a line may begin with two unstressed syllables:

To a | green | thought in a | green | shade
(A. Marvell: *Garden.*)

Though the | heart be | still as | loving,
And the | moon be | still as | bright.
(Byron: *We'll Go No More A-roving.*)

Such syllables, being merely preparatory to the first stress, are not counted as part of the series of time divisions; *i. e.* there are as many *feet* in a line as there are *bars* in the scansion. When a verse does not begin with an unstressed syllable—as do a large proportion of English verses—we shall say that it begins with *direct attack*, *e. g.*

| Come and | trip it | as you | go.
(Milton: *Allegro.*)

| Warriors and | chiefs! Should the | shaft or the | sword.
(Byron: *Song of Saul.*)

When the final foot of a line is—as so often happens—a monosyllable, it may have the same time value as the preceding feet, or the time may be filled out by a rest—the pause at the end of the line, if the reader makes this pause.[5]

A line that ends with an unstressed syllable is said to have a *light ending*, *e. g.*[6]

To | be, or | not to | be: | that is the | question.
(*Hamlet*, III, i.)

[5] Another way of considering the final monosyllable is to count the syllables before the first stress in the following line as filling up the time of this final foot. This way disregards the line unit in verse, *e. g.*

Where | throngs of | knights and | barons | bold, In | weeds of | peace high | triumphs | hold, With | store . . . etc. *See* C. F. Jacob in the *Sewanee Review*, July, 1911.

[6] Sometimes called a feminine, or weak ending.

We occasionally have a double light ending, as in,

| Have you your | father's | leave? What | says Po- | lonius.
(*Hamlet*, I, ii.)

But | love and | nature | these are | two more | terrible.
(Tennyson: *Princess*.)

The conclusions of the first chapter show that though the time value of the feet which compose a line must be sensibly equal, the number of syllables in each foot may vary. Two or three to a foot are most common in English verse:[7]

| Honor, | riches, | marriage- | blessing,
| Long con- | tinuance, | and in- | creasing,
| Hourly | joys be | still up- | on you!
| Juno | sings her | blessings | on you.
(*The Tempest*, IV, i.)

| This is a | spray the Bird | clung to,
| Making it | blossom with | pleasure,
| Ere the high | tree-top she | sprung to,
| Fit for her | nest and her | treasure.
(Browning: *Misconceptions*.)

| Often I | think of the | beautiful | town
That is | seated | by the | sea;
| Often in | thought go | up and | down
The | pleasant | streets of that | dear old | town,
And my | youth comes | back to | me.
(Longfellow: *My Lost Youth*.)

The final foot in each line in this last quotation is monosyllabic. A foot of one syllable may occur as well anywhere else in the line, or there may be several in the same line, *e. g.*

| Break, | break, | break,
On thy | cold gray | stones O, | sea!
(Tennyson.)

[7] These scansions represent, of course, merely the present author's reading of these lines, not the only good reading.

| Green | grow the | rushes, | O!
(Burns.)

His | foe is | fire, | fire, | fire!
| Hark his | hoarse dis- | persing | cry.
(Stephen Phillips: *Fireman.*)

| Toad that | under the | cold | stone
(*Macbeth.*)

| Toll | for the | brave,
The | brave that | are no | more.
(Cowper: *Loss of the Royal George.*)

In all these cases a monosyllabic word is made important not only by its stress but also by occupying a whole time division. But one must remember that a long "quantity" (*i. e.* prolongation of a syllable) and what we have defined as stress and accent[8] are not the same; in these examples all three happen to coincide. A comparison of the two following readings of a line from *King Lear* will bring out this point:

Blôw | winds, and | crack your | cheeks! | rage! | blow!
| Blow | winds, and | crack your | cheeks! | rage! | blow!

In both readings the word *Blow* may receive the same force of voice, but in the second the word is prolonged to the duration of a whole foot. The first reading makes the line pentameter, the second, hexameter.[9]

Four syllables are frequently found composing a foot:

| Whirling like a | windmill on a | dirty scud to | lea.
(Kipling: *Anchor Song.*)

[8] *See above*, p. 13.

[9] Another way of reading it as pentameter is,
| Blow | winds, and | crack your | cheeks! râge! | blow!
This reading makes the rhythm move faster toward the end of the line than either of the others make it.

| Dizzying and | deafening the | air with its | sound
(Southey: *Lodore.*)

| Baa, bâa, | black shêep, | have you any | wool?
(*Mother Goose.*)

There's a | barrel-organ | caroling a- | cross a gôlden | street
(Alfred Noyes: *Barrel-Organ.*)

Feet of more than four syllables practically do not occur in English verse, though they are not unusual in some of the rhythms which occur in the French alexandrine. Swinburne's *Super Flumina Babylonis* is apparently intended to be read with a foot of five syllables in each long line, *e. g.*

By the | waters of | Babylon we sat | down and | wept,
Remembering thee,
That for | ages of | agony hast en- | dured, and slept,[10]
And wouldst not see.

A possible reading of a line in the third stanza of Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* employs a foot of even six syllables. This, however, is a *tour de force.*[11]

The | double double double | beat
Of the | thundering | drum.

Many combinations of these different kinds of feet are possible in the same line. In the following reading we have one, two, and three syllables to a foot:

The | lone | couch of his | ever- | lasting | sleep.
(Shelley: *Alastor.*)

[10] These lines might be read as pentameters, instead of hexameters, by putting light stresses on the words *we* and *hast*, but this reading to be consistent would require a light stress in the same position throughout the sixty-four long lines of the poem.

[11] Professor John Erskine's ed. *Golden Treasury.* Intro. This gives a fine rolling effect and keeps the prevailing dimeter of the stanza.

In this next line, if we do not elide[12] the *e* in *shattering*, we have one, two, three, and four:

To | plunge in | cataract | shattering on | black | rocks.

In the following, from Alfred Noyes' *Forty Singing Seamen*, we have both four syllable and two syllable feet:

| Forty sînging | seamen in an | old blâck | barque.[13]

The following two lines (as they are usually read) have pauses after the monosyllabic feet to make them fill the same time as the trisyllabic:

| Kentish Sir | Byng ( ) | stood for his | King ( )
| Bidding the | crop-headed | Parliament | swing ( )

So far, we have considered merely the time relation of the feet to one another; nothing has been said about the time relation of the syllables within a foot. This brings up the vexed question of *Quantity* in English verse. The difficulty of the subject lies in the fact that we easily confuse either the accent or the quality of a syllable with its quantity. The distinction of terms which phoneticians make may be illustrated by comparing the accented "long close *o*" in *homely* with the unaccented "short close *o*" in *opaque* and the accented "short open *o*" in *hotly*. The difference in quantity (*i. e.*, duration) between the *o* in *homely* and that in *opaque* is not hard to detect, but how about the duration of the syllable *home* in different positions in the same sentence? For example, in the reading,

| Home-keeping | youth have | ever | homely | wits,
(*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I, i.)

[12] *See below*, p. 29.

[13] The third foot here seems to move slower than the others. This may be an actual slowing of the rhythm, *retardando*, in music, or the natural effect of making two syllables take the same time as four. It is also to be noted that emphasis on a syllable (the accent on *black*) *seems* to lengthen it.

if the feet are equal in time value, does it not seem probable that the *home* in *Home-keeping* would be given less time than the *home* in *homely?* The difference in value of the same syllable will be even more apparent if we change the line and read it,

| Home-keeping | youth have | home | ever in | mind.

The fact seems to be that the quantity of English syllables may vary, to a certain extent, with their position in a sentence and with the personal equation of different speakers.

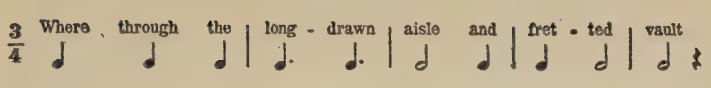
English ears are sensitive to differences in the intensity (accent) and the quality of syllables, but are not subtle in detecting slight differences in quantity.[14] Our sense of musical rhythm is extremely subtle in appreciating fine distinctions in the relative duration of the beats within a measure, but our sense of verse rhythm is not so accurate. If it were, our enjoyment of verse might be finer. Many people find that the recording of the feet in a line, the number of syllables in a foot, and the specially accented syllables, constitutes a scansion scheme adequate for their study. They may as well skip the next few paragraphs.

The usual method of recording the time relation of syllables within a foot is that of musical notation. If one hears verse in three-four time he will note his scansion of Gray's line (according to his reading of it), either as,

or

or

[14] The qualities of English sounds are considered in Chapter VIII, under tone-color.



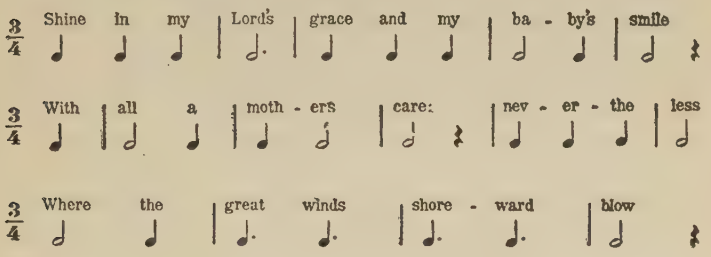
The lines,

Shine in my lord's grace and my baby's smile.
(E. Arnold: *Light of Asia.*)

With all a mother's care: nevertheless
(Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

Where the great winds shoreward blow,
(Matthew Arnold: *Forsaken Mermaid.*)

might be read in this way:



Another recording system which one not accustomed to musical notation might find easier, would be to take arbitrarily the number 6 as a unit and show the time relation of the syllables in terms of the components of the unit 6, *e. g.*, 6 equals $4 + 2 = 2 + 4 = 3 + 3 = 2 + 2 + 2$. The readings recorded above in musical notation would be given in this way:[16]

| Where through the | long-drawn | aisle and | fretted | vault.
| 2 2 2 | 3 3 | 4 2 | 2 4 | 4 (2)

[15] If the student is interested in the system of musical notation he should *see* Lanier's *Science of English Verse*, J. P. Dabney's *English Versification*, W. Thompson's *Basis of English Rhythm* (Glasgow: 1904).

[16] The numbers in parentheses indicate an interval of silence.

| Shine in my | lord's | grace and my | baby's | smile.
| 2 2 2 | 6 | 2 2 2 | 4 2 | 4 (2)
With | all a | mother's | care: | neverthe- | less.
2 | 4 2 | 4 2 | 4 (2) | 2 2 2 | 4
| Where the | great winds | shoreward | blow.
| 4 2 | 3 3 | 3 3 | 4 (2)

Neither the musical notation nor the figure notation can represent a reading exactly, for the time divisions, one must remember, are not *exactly*, only *sensibly* equal. Another difficulty lies with the representation of trisyllabic feet. The notation $\frac{\text{shine}}{2}\ \frac{\text{in}}{2}\ \frac{\text{my}}{2}$ is probably quite inexact for most readings of the line in which this foot occurs. If we wished greater exactness we should become involved with cumbrous fractions, *e. g.*

$$\frac{\text{Shine}}{3}\ \frac{\text{in}}{\frac{3}{2}}\ \frac{\text{my}}{\frac{3}{2}}$$

All we can hope for in a practicable notation is an indication of the rhythm to which the reading most nearly approaches. In general, through the rest of the book, we shall not find a detailed notation necessary except to indicate some of the more unusual kinds of verse rhythm. Slight differences in the reading of ordinary lines seem to me questions of taste which need not be recorded in general discussions of verse. For example, whether one read,

| Lord of all | being | throned a- | far,
| 2 2 2 | 4 2 | 4 2 | 4 (2)
(O. W. Holmes: *Sunday Hymn.*)

or,

| Lord of all | being | throned a- | far,
| 2 2 2 | 2 4 | 4 2 | 4 (2)

would probably escape the notice of most listeners, except when both readings could be compared. For ordinary

purposes we shall indicate our notations by as simple means as possible—by a use of bars to mark the meter, and of the signs ` and ^ to mark, respectively, light stresses and extra accents.

Two other terms we may find useful in discussions of scansion—elision and cesura. *Elision* is either the blending of vowels between two words, or the suppression of one within a word, *e. g.*

> Above the Aeonian mount, while it pursues.
> To set himself in glory above his peers.
>
> Desperate[17] revenge and battle dangerous.

In the age of Pope the strict convention of the number of syllables in a line led poets to indicate intended elisions with an apostrophe:

> On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike.
>
> (*Essay on Man.*)

Mr. Robert Bridges' study of Milton's prosody shows that Milton had very definite rules for his use of elision, but they were rules dictated purely by his ear. There is no necessity for rules of elision in verse, or, in fact, of recognizing elision at all. The cases I have cited may be read as examples of lines with feet of three syllables varying with those of two.

A *cesura* is a pause in the metrical reading of a line. There may be one or more cesuras in a line; a cesura may come anywhere in a line, according to the sense of the passage. It is to be noted that the time occupied by a cesura lengthens the foot in which the cesura occurs; but, like breathing at the end of a measure in singing, the pause, unless too great, merely suspends our sense of meter, without breaking the scheme subjectively established. This

[17] This, as an elision of common speech, differs from the two cases of verse elision preceding it.

may be shown by reading the same line many times with pauses of varying length at the cesura. A point will be found beyond which the line ceases to be felt as a single rhythmic unit. The following lines illustrate the variations in the use of the cesura:

She had
A heart || how shall I say? || too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; || she liked whate'er
She looked on, || and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! || My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the west. . . .
(Browning: *My Last Duchess.*)

As one for knightly giusts || and fierce encounters fitt.
Upon his foe, || a Dragon horrible and stearne.
(Spenser: *Faery Queene,* li.)

With the longer meters, hexameter, heptameter, etc., a reader may prefer to divide the rhythm regularly after the third or fourth foot, whether the sense requires a pause there or not. Thus, the last line quoted would be given a second cesura after *Dragon.* If, however, this regularity of position of the cesura is insisted on with meters like the octameter of Alfred Noyes' *Orpheus and Eurydice,* they merely break into shorter lines. The octameter can be preserved by such division as,

Cloud upon cloud, || the purple pinewoods clung to the rich
Arcadian mountains,

followed by,

Holy-sweet as a column of incense, || where Eurydice roamed and
sung,

and occasionally varied by a line like the following, with a pause after *fleet,* or *fawn,* or *fern,* or even no cesura at all:

Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew from the fern at break of day.

The monotony of the "Poulter's measure" of the sixteenth century (hexameters alternating with heptameters *ad nauseam*) is caused by the constant recurrence of cesuras in the same place, *e. g.*

The garden gives good food, || and ayd for leaches cure:
The garden, full of great delight, || his master doth allure.
Sweet sallet herbs bee here, || and herbs of every kind:
The ruddy grapes, the seemly fruits || bee here at hand to find.
(Tottle's *Miscellany: Garden.*)

In pentameter, the shifting of the position of the cesura from line to line is an important means of avoiding monotony. The passage quoted from Browning illustrates this, and Milton's masterly variation in this respect is one of the glories of his blank verse. In the heroic verse of the age of Pope, when an arbitrary number of syllables was a strict convention, it was felt necessary (with occasional exceptions) to make a pause after the fourth, fifth or sixth syllable of a line; but the importance of at least so much variety was recognized.[18] Observe the slight changes of position of the cesura in the following:

Meanwhile, || declining || from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots || his burning ray;
The hungry judges || soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang || that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange || returns in peace,
And the long labors of the toilet cease.
(Pope: *Rape of the Lock*, IV.)

[18] Metrists call a cesura *masculine* when it comes after a stressed syllable, as in,

Too easily impressed; || she liked whate'er;

it is classed as *feminine* if it comes after an unstressed syllable, as in,

She looked on, || and her looks went everywhere.

Whether a cesura is masculine or feminine is a matter of very great importance in trochaic and dactylic verse. *See* Chapters XVI and XVII.

CHAPTER IV

Verse Pattern—Duple and Triple Rhythm

According to the definition of meter upon which the discussion so far has been based, any line which a reader divides into approximately equal time parts is verse. This is the underlying principle of English verse, from *Beowulf* to Browning. Different periods, however, have developed different conventions and different ornaments of verse; and the English sense of rhythm has varied from allowing extreme freedom as to the number of syllables to a time part, to demanding complete symmetry in this respect, then back to a position somewhere between these two attitudes. Here is a scansion of a passage of alliterative Middle English verse. Following Professor Skeat,[1] I have considered each long line as two short ones (divided by a point in the manuscript), though they are printed as one. If the reader prefers, they may be regarded as long lines, with the cesura indicated by the point.

In a | somer | seson· Whan | soft was the | sonne,
I | shope me in | shroudes· As I a | shepe | were,
In | habite as an | heremite· Un- | holy of | workes,
Went | wyde in this | world· | Wonderes to | here.
Ac on a | May | mornynge· On | Malverne | hulles
Me by- | fel a | ferly· Of | fairy, me | thoughte;
I was | wery for- | wandered· And I | went me to | reste
Vnder a | brode | banke[2]· bi a | bornes | side,
And as I | lay and | lened[2]· and | loked in the | wateres,

[1] Ed. *Piers the Plowman*, Oxford, 1900.

[2] Professor Skeat in these two lines makes a foot of *Vnder a* and another of *as I*, thus giving three feet to these lines. Line 9, however, he does not treat in this way. I prefer to consider that there are three unstressed syllables at the beginning of all three lines. These may be regarded as corresponding to the free recitative that often begins a chant.

20 I | slombered in a | slepyng· it | sweyved so | merye.
(*Piers the Plowman*, Prol.)

Evidently the only principles of this verse are that there should be two feet to a line with alliteration in the first three stressed syllables of every two lines. The number of syllables to a foot is usually either two or three; but one, four, and even five ("*slombered in a*," l. 19) are allowable. Lines may begin with direct attack,

| Wonderes to | here, (line 8)

or, with either one, two, or three unstressed syllables.

Verse based on such liberal principles (called *tumbling verse*) was written during the Anglo-Saxon period and during the Middle English "Alliterative Revival," to which *Piers the Plowman* belongs; but this irregular kind of rhythm has not been in fashion since Langland's time. Two hundred years before this revival, the native English verse began to be superseded by verse with a regular rhythmic pattern—a norm of two syllables to each foot. This we shall call *Duple Rhythm*. Later developed a norm of three syllables to the foot—*Triple Rhythm*—but this type of verse did not have a definitely recognized place until late in the seventeenth century. Early in the nineteenth century a third norm came to be accepted—*Duple-Triple Rhythm*—a free combination of the two others, which has a different effect from either. *Quadruple Rhythm*, a norm of four syllables to the foot, was the last to be recognized, and is still comparatively unusual.

None of these rhythmic patterns was used with an unvaried evenness at any period of our literature. The principle of time equality in the feet makes slight departures from the pattern always possible without breaking the established meter of a poem. Certain slight departures from the exact rhythmic pattern have always been felt to add to the beauty of English verse, but what these changes may be, has varied with different ages and different schools.

The following passages exemplify the four types of rhythmic pattern:

Duple Rhythm:

The | curfew | tolls the | knell of | parting | day,
The | lowing | herd winds | slowly | o'er the | lea,
The | plowman | homeward | plods his | weary | way,
And | leaves the | world to | darkness | and to | me.
(Gray: *Elegy.*)

Triple Rhythm:

The As- | syrian came | down like a | wolf on the | fold,
And his | cohorts were | gleaming in | purple and | gold;
And the | sheen of their | spears was like | stars on the | sea,
When the | blue wâve rôlls | nightly on | deep Gali- | lee.
(Byron: *Hebrew Melodies.*)

Duple-Triple Rhythm:

The | wind blôws | out of the | gates of the | day
The | wind blôws | over the | lonely of | heart
And the | lonely of | heart is | withered a- | way
While the | fairies | dance in a | place a- | part.
(W. B. Yeats: *Land of Heart's Desire.*)

Quadruple Rhythm:

In the | silence of the | camp before the | fight,
When it's | good to make your | will and say your | prayer,
You can | hear my *strûmpty-* | *tumpty* over- | night
Ex- | plaining tên to | one was always | fair.
I'm the | prophet of the | Utterly Ab- | surd,
Of the | Patently Im- | possible and | Vain—
And | when the Thîng that | Couldn't has oc- | curred,
Give me | time to change my | leg and go a- | gain.
(Kipling: *Song of the Banjo.*)

The even rhythmic pattern of the first three examples runs on continuously; the line division halts it for an instant, but does not change it. In the last passage, the

quadruple pattern is perfect in two of the three feet of each line; the final monosyllabic foot is followed by only one or two preliminary syllables before the first stress of the next line. This rhythm almost never occurs with perfect evenness.

It is clear that many of the words which demand at least a slight extra accent in the passage of quadruple rhythm would be given a full stress and mark a time division in a context of some other rhythm. The quadruple rhythm subordinates them. Evidently syllables do not always have the same value either in stress or time, but can vary in both as the rhythm in which they occur may demand. Compare, for instance, the value of *spiritual* in two lines of *In Memoriam* (LXXXV and CXXXI).

That | loved to | handle | spiritual | strife.
| Rise in the | spiri- | tual | rock.

In one line it occupies one foot, in the other two; though the normal rhythm of the poem in which both lines occur is duple tetrameter.[3] Again, compare the different time and stress values given to the words repeated in four lines of Alfred Noyes' *Flos Mercatorum*. The meter in this poem varies from duple pentameter to quadruple tetrameter.

Fetch | Whitting- | ton! The | lad must | stake his | groat!
"A | groat!" cried | Whittington, | standing | there a- | ghast.
| Pray for the | souls of | Richard | Whitting- | ton,
Alice, his wife, . . .
| "Quick," she said, "O, | quick," she said, "they | want you Richard | Whittington."

Illustrations of the same thing may be found even where a word is used twice in a line:[4]

[3] T. S. Omond: *English Meter*, p. 20.

[4] The reader may differ from my reading of these lines, but if he will admit any of the above scansions as even possible, the point in question will be exemplified. M. Verrier (*op. cit.*, p. 79) has shown by psychological experiments that syllables objectively vary in time value accord-

Un- | reverent | Gloster! | Thou art | rever- | end.
(*Henry VI*, Part I, III, i.)

And cor- | pore- | al to | incor- | poreal | turn.
(*Paradise Lost*, V, 413.)

The explanation of this change in syllabic value is that rhythm is very largely subjective, so that when it becomes firmly established in the consciousness of the reader or listener, the words may occasionally be lengthened or shortened, and emphasis suppressed or added to make the words fit the rhythm. That rhythm is very largely subjective is further indicated by the fact that one can hear a watch ticking in duple, triple, or quadruple rhythm if one actually tries to hear it so; one may also make the rhythm of a train fit that of a tune running in one's head.

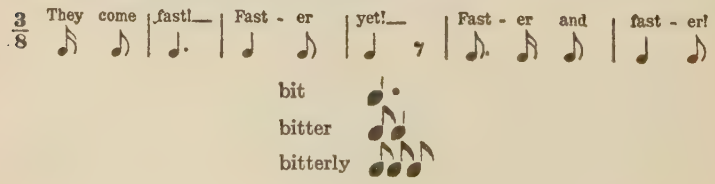
Usually the rhythmical pattern of a poem ought to be clearly established in its first line. The poet may then be allowed to introduce any variation in the number of syllables to a foot, or in strength of stresses, which does not obliterate the original pattern, or set up a new pattern. When much variation is used the strict pattern should be often repeated. In a pentameter with duple rhythm, one trisyllabic foot will not greatly change the character of the rhythm, *e. g.*

Tho' | faintly, | merrily | —far and | far a- | way.
(Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

Two trisyllabic feet in this rhythm are occasionally allowed by the Elizabethans as,

---

ing to their juxtaposition, even in prose. He summarizes his results in musical notation thus:



Al- | ready | Faustus hath | hazarded | that for | me
(Marlowe: *Dr. Faustus.*)

The rhythm of such a line we feel has departed from the duple norm and is duple-triple. The eighteenth century considered this degree of irregularity barbarous, and even the nineteenth century has generally eschewed it. Such changes in rhythm the modern ear finds acceptable only when, for the sake of some special effect, the poet is frankly attempting a *tour de force.* Tennyson is especially fond of doing this, *e. g.*

Of | some pre- | cipitous | rivulet | to the | wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long.

The | hollower- | bellowing | ocean | and a- | gain
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.
(*Enoch Arden.*)

| Myriads of | rivulets | hurrying | through the | lawn
The moan of doves in immemorial elms.
(*Princess.*)

Notice that in each of these cases the poet has steadied the rhythm by making the line which follows more regular. Alfred Noyes has a daring break in pattern for a special effect in *Drake* (bk. IV):

Like windswept withered leaves those little ships,
Now | hurtled | to the | Zenith and | now | plunged
| Down unto | bottomless | gulfs, were | suddenly | scattered
And whirled away. Drake on the Golden Hind.

The frequent introduction of lines with a single trisyllabic foot into verse of duple rhythm is not only allowable, but desirable for the sake of variety. And we have just seen that lines with even two trisyllabic feet may occur; but if several such lines occur in succession our sense of rhythm feels that a new pattern has been introduced. This point

may be illustrated by a passage from Tennyson's *Maud*. It is written in duple-triple rhythm, but the separate lines which compose it might each be introduced into the *Idylls of the King* without seriously disturbing the blank verse norm (duple rhythm) in which that poem is written. There they would be single exceptions to the regular duple rhythm; in *Maud* they are a part of the freer duple-triple rhythm. Here is the passage:

That an | iron | tyranny | now should | bend or | cease,
The | glory of | manhood | stand on his | ancient | height,
Nor | Britain's | one sole | God be the | million- | aire:
No | more shall | commerce be | all in | all, and | Peace
| Pipe on her | pastoral | hillock a | languid | note,
And | watch her | harvest | ripen, her | herd in- | crease.[5]

When two trisyllabic feet are introduced into one line

[5] Lines like the third, fourth, and sixth with but one ripple can of course be found very frequently in the *Idylls*, *e. g.*

The | sudden | trumpet | sounded as | in a | dream.
(*Last Tournament.*)

The second line is very close to,

And | many a | glancing | plash and | sallowy | isle,
(*Ibid.*)

or even nearer to,

Through | many a | league-long | bower he | rode. At | length,
(*Ibid*)

(if *bower* be read as a dissyllable). The fifth line may be read with a rhythm almost the same as,

| Fled like a | glittering | rivulet | to the | tarn.
(*Lancelot and Elaine.*)

Cf. also,

| Scaling, Sir | Lancelot | from the | perilous | nest.
(*Last Tournament.*)

The first line I cannot find a parallel for, but its rhythm adds merely one light syllable to the rhythm of,

And the | days | darken | round me | and the | years
(*Passing of Arthur.*)

of duple rhythm, the duple rhythm is less disturbed if the two feet are not close together, *e. g.*

|Back to the | gates of | Heaven; the | sulphurous | hail.
(*Paradise Lost*, I, 171.)

A line beginning with two unstressed syllables has a similar effect to one with a trisyllabic foot, *e. g.*

From the | dread | sweep of the | down- | streaming | seas.
(*Enoch Arden.*)

And the | new sûn | rose | bringing the | new | year.
(Tennyson: *Passing of Arthur.*)

These last two examples also show a combination of monosyllabic feet with trisyllabic. This seems to create a balance between two rhythms, and pleases our ear, if the line is held steady by a normal line preceding or following. Other examples of this are:

| Just where the | prone | edge of the | wood be- | gan.
| E'en to the | last | dip of the | vanishing | sail.
(*Enoch Arden.*)

The question of what variations from the pattern are allowable is to some extent a matter of the taste of an individual ear, or of the taste of an age. An English bishop asked Pope to polish some of Milton, and William Hamilton of Bangor actually did polish Hamlet's soliloquy so that it began:

My anxious soul is tore with doubtful strife,
And hangs suspended betwixt death and life;
Life! death! dread objects of mankind's debate;
Whether superior to the shocks of fate,
To bear its fiercest ills with stedfast mind,
To nature's order piously resigned,
Or, with magnanimous and brave disdain,
Return her back th' injurious gift again.

What would the eighteenth century have thought of some of Browning's effects, if Shakespeare and Milton were considered irregular! There is no reason *a priori* that any arrangement of syllables that is possible to read in approximately equal time parts should not please our ear as it did the ears of the Saxons, but poets have accustomed us to certain rhythms and neglected others so that we call unusual ones bad verse. Chaucer could write,

| Twenty | bokës | clad in | black or | red
(*Canterbury Tales, Prologue,* 294.)

or,

I | mene of | Mark, | Mathew, | Luk and | John
(*Canterbury Tales, Melibeus, Prologue.*)

in contexts of lines of ten syllables. Shakespeare and other Elizabethans also used the nine syllable line occasionally, *e. g.*

| Dear my | lord, if | you in your | own | proof
(*Much Ado About Nothing,* IV, i, 46.)

A | third | thinks with- | out ex- | pense at | all.
(*Henry VI,* Part I, i, 76.)

Modern poets, however, have accustomed our ears to consider this a blemish, so that when a blank verse line begins with direct attack there must be three syllables in the first foot, *e. g.*

| Guarded the | sacred | shield of | Lance- | lot
(Tennyson: *Lancelot and Elaine.*)

How far allowable variation has gone in modern poetry may be seen by reading (in their contexts) the lines quoted in the last chapter as examples of lines with different kinds of feet.

The rhythmical pattern of a line must be clearly marked by the poet if he expects his verses to be read as he intended.

Poe has put it very strongly: "*That* rhythm is erroneous (at some point or other more or less obvious) which *any* ordinary reader *can*, without design, read improperly. It is the business of the poet so to construct his line that the intention *must* be caught *at once.*" [6]

The lack of clearness of rhythmical pattern in a line may cause it to be read as prose, or may very often lead the reader to change the metrical pattern, *i. e.* to divide the line into a meter that is not consistent with the rest of the lines in the passage. For example, the verse,

How happy could I be with either,

may be read as duple tetrameter or triple trimeter;[7] but the context,

Were t'other dear charmer away,

shows that the second reading was intended by the poet. Professor Lewis[8] has amusingly suggested that the Miltonic lines with two light stresses distributed as in,

His mínistèrs of véngeance ànd pursuít,

would fit perfectly into a context of trimeter like,

When the énterprising búrglar isn't búrgling,
And the cút-throat isn't óccupied in críme,
(W. S. Gilbert: *Pirates of Penzance.*)

though they may also be read perfectly in the duple pentameter of *Paradise Lost.* As the subjectivity of rhythm is very largely relied upon by the poet to insure a correct reading of his verses, it is very unfair to judge isolated lines.

---

[6] Poe: *Rationale of Verse.*

[7] *e. g.* How | happy | could I | be with | either,

or,

How | happy could | I be with | either.

[8] *Principles of English Verse,* p. 46.

Metrical pattern (a regular number of feet to each line) may be varied slightly, just as rhythmical pattern may. Shakespeare occasionally introduces lines of two, three, four, or six feet into his pentameter.[9] Here is one of three feet, which occurs in the middle of a soliloquy:

> I see thee yet in form as palpable
> As This which now I draw.
> Thou marshallst me the way That I was going.
> (*Macbeth*, II.)

This breaking the metrical pattern with a short line is rarely found except in dramatic verse. The introduction of a hexameter (alexandrine) in rimed pentameter, however, was a very frequent trick of the eighteenth century poets.

Radical changes in meter should be intentional on the part of the poet; he should not write lines of rhythm so ambiguous that his readers unconsciously fall into another meter. When one reads the following lines apart from their context one tends to make them tetrameter:

> Fears of the brave and Follies of the wise.
> (Johnson: *Vanity of Human Wishes.*)

> Because Thou hast hearkened to the voice of Thy wife,
> (*Paradise Lost*, X, 198.)

but they easily fall into a pentameter division when read in their pentameter contexts:

> In | life's lâst | scene what | prodi- | gies sur- | prise,
> | Fears of the | brave and | follies | ôf the | wise!

> On | Adam | last thus | judgment | he pro- | nounced:—
> Be | cause thou hast | hearkened | tò the | voice of thy | wife.

These seem to me allowable lines in spite of the fact that one might misread them at first. The lines that follow

[9] The commonest change in meter is the introduction of the ten-syllable tetrameter in the pentameter line. *See* Chapter XI.

below, however,—though their authorship is most distinguished—I cannot admire as well written pentameters. To divide them into five time parts the prose accents of the words must be so wrenched that the effect is very artificial.

Light from above from the fountain of light.
(*Paradise Lost,* IV, 289.)

Yet fall. Remember and fear to trangress.
(*Paradise Lost,* VI, 913.)

Burned after them to the bottomless pit.[10]
(*Paradise Lost,* VI, 866.)

Created thee in the image of God.
(*Paradise Lost,* VII, 527.)

You do look, my son, in a moved sort.
(*The Tempest.*)

When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk.
(*Coriolanus.*)

By the waters of life where'er they sat.
(*Paradise Lost,* XI, 79.)

And made him bow to the gods of his wives
(*Paradise Regained,* II, 171.)

Thank me no thankings nor proud me no prouds.
(*Romeo and Juliet.*)

Illimitable, insuperable, infinite.
(Swinburne: *Elegy on Burton.*)

These lines show how too great a change in an established rhythmic pattern may lead to an ambiguity in meter.

Sometimes, in dramatic verse, lines are introduced that

[10] Lowell (Essay on *Milton*) suggests that the printer may have dropped a word, and emends the line to read,

Burnt after them *down* to the bottomless pit.

probably are not meant to scan. The following from *Romeo and Juliet* could be read as pentameter, thus:

| Day, | night, | hour, tîde, | time, wôrk, | play,

or, we may consider that the rhythm is broken by the anger of the speaker, and read it as prose.

Verse pattern in modern poetry has been carried even farther than merely establishing a norm of a certain meter and a duple, triple, or duple-triple rhythm. A fixed sequence of variation may be taken as a pattern, for instance, the scheme,

| x x | x x x | x x | x x

represents the rhythmic pattern of Swinburne's *Lines on the Death of Trelawney, i. e.*, each line begins with direct attack and the second foot of each is always trisyllabic:

| Winds that | warred with the | winds of | morning,
Storm-winds rocking the red great dawn,
Close at last, and a film is drawn
Over the eyes of the storm-bird, scorning
Now no longer the loud wind's warning,
Waves that threaten or waves that fawn.

This elaborate symmetry of arrangement makes a sort of verse-tune. It is, of course, a necessity in verse written in imitation of classical rhythms. A fixed and definite pattern is characteristic of nearly all Greek and Latin measures. The Lesser Sapphic stanza, for example, is composed of three pentameter lines concluded by one dimeter. The pentameters begin with direct attack and have a trisyllabic ripple in the middle, *e. g.*

| Saw the | white im- | placable | Aphro- | dite,
| Saw the | hair un- | bound and the | feet un- | sandalled
Shine as the fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder
Shone Mitylene.

(Swinburne: *Sapphics.*)

This adherence to a fixed rhythmic pattern is not only characteristic of classical imitations[11] in English, but of many other exquisitely musical poems of Swinburne and a number of other modern poets.[12] A simple pattern is that of William Watson's *England My Mother*, a poem of twenty-four stanzas, all exactly following the arrangement of the duple-triple rhythm of the first, without variation:

| x x x | x x

| England my | mother
| Wardress of | waters
| Builder of | peoples
| Maker of | men.

The opening of Swinburne's *Channel Passage* has a more elaborate "tune." The second and sixth foot of each octameter line is trisyllabic, the others dissyllabic, and each line begins with direct attack:

| Forth from | Calais, at | dawn of | night, when | sunset | summer on | autumn | shone,
Fared the steamer alert and loud through seas whence only the sun was gone:
Soft and sweet as the sky they smiled, and bade man welcome: a dim sweet hour
Gleamed and whispered in wind and sea, and heaven was fair as a field in flower.

Kipling is one of our greatest masters of rhythmic

[11] For other examples *see* Tennyson's *To Milton* (hendecasyllabics), Clough's *Hope evermore and believe* (elegiacs), Hovey's *Taleisin* [pp. 27-28] (choriambics), and Rupert Brooke's *Choriambics*.

[12] More of these patterns are analyzed in the chapter on duple-triple rhythm. *See* Chapter XVIII.

technique. Many of his poems have as clear cut and definite a rhythm as if they were accompanied by a musical setting. He has said that he considers a large part of his work over when he once has the "tune" of his poem in his head. The pattern of the *First Chantey* is a good example of his finished technique. It gains its peculiar effect from the checking of the flow of the triple rhythm by a monosyllabic foot always occurring before the cesura in the middle of the line:

| Mine was the | woman to | me, | darkling I | found her;
| Haling her | dumb from the | camp, | held her and | bound her.
| Hot rose her | tribe on our | track | ere I had | proved her:
| Hearing her | laugh in the | gloom, | greatly I | loved her.

Compare the somewhat similar pattern of Longfellow's *Skeleton in Armor:*

| Once as I | told in glee
| Tales of the | stormy sea,
| Soft eyes did | gaze on me,
| Burning yet | tender;
| And as the | white stars shine,
| On the dark | Norway pine,
| On that dark | heart of mine
| Fell their soft | splendor.

Longfellow has borrowed his rhythmic and stanzaic pattern from Drayton's *Ballad of Agincourt,* which Tennyson also used for his *Charge of the Light Brigade.* Another interesting effect of Kipling's is the following combination of duple with quadruple rhythm:

| Coast-wîse—| cross-seâs—| round the wôrld and | back again
| Where the flâw shall | head us or the | full Trâde | suits—
| Plain-saîl—| storm-saîl—| lay your bôard and | tack again
And | that's the way we'll | pay Pâddy | Doyle for his | boots![13]

[13] Note that the dissyllabic feet have extra accents. *See above,* p. 25, note 13.

Sometimes a poet may employ in the same poem a number of different line patterns to which he recurs from time to time to vary the music of his verse. Alfred Noyes' *Barrel-Organ* is a striking example:

There's a | barrel-organ | carolling a- | cross a gôlden | street
In the | City as the | sun sînks | low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surrounds the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the | Symphony that | rules the dây and | night.

There are three types of line here: five are tetrameters with four syllables in three feet and one in the last; two are trimeters with four syllables in the first foot, two in the second, and one in the last; and the final line is a trimeter with four syllables in two feet followed by a monosyllabic ending. All the lines begin with two unstressed syllables. The combination of eight of these lines makes a larger rhythmical pattern, the stanza. Eleven of the stanzas of the poem are made up of slightly different combinations of the three types of rhythm in this first stanza. Then there are two other types of stanza occasionally interspersed, of totally different rhythms that make pleasing changes in the music of the poem. One is composed of duple tetrameter alternating with trimeter:

And | there *La* | *Travi-* | *ata* | sighs
A- | nother | sadder | song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—*a dance!*

The other form of stanza is composed of duple octameter alternating with heptameter:[14]

Go | down to | Kew in | lilac- | time, in | lilac- | time, in | lilac- | time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in Summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The poem with the exception of four or five lines out of a total of 166 is composed on the seven pattern lines pointed out, arranged in larger patterns, or stanzas.

The reader who is interested should study a collection like the *Oxford Book of Verse* to understand the manifold possibilities of metrical and rhythmical patterns that have been used by English poets.

[14] One might increase the tempo of this and read it as quadruple tetrameter:

Go | down to Kew in | lilac-time, in | lilac-time, in | lilac-time.

CHAPTER V

Prose and Verse[1]

Several times in the preceding pages, "a prose reading" of a passage has been mentioned as something different from "a verse reading." Before going further with the discussion of verse we shall have to determine if possible what the chief distinctions are—from the point of view of rhythm—between prose and verse.

Will the reader be patient enough to read the following passage of prose, trying to decide upon which syllables he puts prominent accents?

> Likewise had he served a year on board a merchantman, and made himself full sailor; and he thrice had plucked a life from the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas: and all men looked upon him favourably. He purchased his own boat, and made a home for Annie, neat and nestlike, half way up the narrow street.

Now what is the difference between the passage as you just read it and as you read it when divided into lines of verse as follows?

> Likewise had he served a year
> On board a merchantman, and made himself
> Full sailor; and he thrice had plucked a life
> From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:
> And all men looked upon him favourably.

[1] Portions of this chapter have already appeared in the *Sewanee Review* (Apr., 1918) in an article, "The Rhythms of Prose and of Free Verse."

He purchased his own boat and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, half way up
The narrow street.

(Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

As soon as we see the passage printed in this form we unconsciously assume that it is written for verse, and feel that we are reading it differently. We instinctively try to arrange the paragraph in a kind of pattern which we did not give it before. Each line is divided into five apparently equal time divisions, and the greater number of the divisions are read with two syllables each. That is, blank verse has an ideal pattern of duple rhythm repeated five times in each line, and the poet must fit his thought to this ideal scheme. But the usual grammatical association of the words that express his thought have a rhythm of their own—a prose rhythm. This does not exactly fit the ideal rhythmical scheme of verse. When we read verse we are conscious of a struggle between these two forces. For instance, a reader of the prose passage might read,

on boárd a mérchantman and máde himself

with three accents and three time divisions, but when the same words occur in blank verse he would probably give more value to the syllables *man* and *self*, or even, if he chose, stress them slightly, to divide the words into five apparently equal time parts, thus: [2]

On boárd a mérchantmán and máde himsélf.

Again, the words of the fifth line would probably be read as prose in this manner:

[2] A "light stress" (*see above*, p. 13) is merely a point at which a time division of verse may occur. It need not receive special force of voice, but merely a slightly greater time value. In the present example the question is whether we read the syllables *merchantman and* in the same time as *board a*, or in twice the time, *i. e.*, whether we make them one foot or two.

And áll mén loóked upon him fávourably;

and as versė in this manner:

And áll mên loóked upòn him fávourablỳ
And | all mên | looked up- | on him | favoura- | bly.

The accent on *men*, which is not required by the ideal verse rhythm, does not interfere with the division into five time parts. The prose phrase, "*and made a hóme for Ánnie,*" one can read, if he choose, accenting but two syllables out of seven, but when the same phrase is read in a context of verse, the rhythmical pattern subjectively established leads one to give a "light stress" to the syllable *made.*

Sometimes the prose rhythm is so marked that it will not yield to the ideal verse rhythm. The phrase,

From the dreád sweép of the dówn-streáming seás

would probably be read by most people in the same way either as verse or as prose. We still feel five apparently equal time divisions, but the rhythm is no longer evenly duple. Our ear, however, accepts this reading as an agreeable change from too constant a regularity.

Verse, then, has an ideal pattern, very largely subjective, of meter and rhythm, to which the poet must fit his thought. If the words fit into the pattern too perfectly, the verse is monotonous; good verse has a constant struggle between the sense of the words as brought out in the prose reading, and the ideal metrical and rhythmical pattern that must be felt in the verse reading. In this struggle, it is the yielding now of one force, now of the other, which gives variety to fixed verse. Prose, of course, having no such ideal framework, can have no struggle between form and thought; variety in prose must come from constant changes in the rhythm itself.

Words arranged in long stretches of perfectly even rhythmical pattern will make monotonous verse or monotonous

prose. The following passage, for example, is almost without variation:

> And gabbling ducks, rejoicing on the surface, clap their wings; whilst wheeling round in airy wanton flights, the glossy pigeons chase their sportive loves, or in soft cooings tell their amorous tale.[3]

This makes very bad prose and not much better verse, for the words fit almost perfectly into the ideal pattern; there is practically no struggle of rhythmic forces. The reader would not have the slightest difficulty in dividing the passage as printed above, into line lengths, as it was written, with pauses at the end of each.

Prose has rhythm as well as verse, though prose rhythm is more irregular, and in the ordinary kinds of writing, more difficult to perceive. In both there is an approach to equality of time intervals between stresses, but we are seldom conscious of this equality in prose reading. We may see evidence of this instinctive attempt to make equal the time divisions between accented syllables in prose, in our reading of the beginning of the passage we discussed first. When we read,

> Líkewise had he sérved a yeár on boárd a
> mérchantman and máde himself fúll saílor,

we huddle together the syllables *likewise had he* and *merchantman and*, in a tendency to pronounce them in the same time as *served a*. Whether this equality is as nearly exact as it is in verse or in music may be questioned; there is merely a tendency toward it.[4] It probably approaches closer

[3] Robert Dodsley: *Agriculture: A Poem.*

[4] Our tendency toward rhythmic utterance is further evident in the shifting of accent in a few dissyllabic words which allow it. For example, in giving an address we say,

Óne *fifteén Broadwáy*,

but we change the accent when we say,

Fífteen mén took the *Broádway* cár.

Cf., also, they sat *outside:* An *oútside* passenger; He went *down staírs:* A *dównstairs* room; Among the *Chinése:* A *Chínese* lantern.

to exactness in speeches and sermons than in ordinary conversation.

The chief differences, then, between fixed verse[5] and prose are that, though both may approach an equality in time divisions, verse has distinct groups of time divisions, which we call lines; and the divisions in verse must have some regular agreement as to the number of syllables in each—*i. e.*, must have a rhythmical pattern.

An analysis of one more passage may make these points clearer:

> And Bame but sniggered, "Why, of course, there's good in all men; and the best of us will make mistakes."
>
> "But no mistake in this," said Kit, "or all together we shall swing at Tyburn—who knows what may leap to light?—You understand? No scandal!"
>
> "Not a breath!"
>
> So in dead silence, Master Richard Bame went out into the darkness and the night.

The colloquial and dramatic nature of this makes one read it without trying to give it a regular rhythm, but it can be made to scan perfectly, when read as verse:

> . . . and Bame but sniggered, "Why, of course,
> There's good in all men; and the best of us
> Will make mistakes." "But no mistake in this,"
> Said Kit, "or who knows what may leap to light?—
> You understand? No scandal!" "Not a breath!"
> So, in dead silence, Master Richard Bame
> Went out into the darkness and the night.
>
> (Alfred Noyes: *A Coiner of Angels.*)

The reason that the passages chosen thus far for illustration are somewhat colloquial in character, is that the dif-

[5] That is, all verse which is not "free," or "vers libre." *See below*, pp. 65 *ff.*

ference between the usual diction of verse and that of simple prose might add a confusing element to a discussion purely of rhythm. In such passages as that just quoted, the subject matter, and therefore the diction, is exactly that of ordinary prose. Passages of greater poetry may be treated in the manner of the specimens above, to prove the same point. When Milton's verse is printed as prose, the reader who does not recognize the passage will make it sound like the splendid prose of Milton's century, *e. g.*

> But what power of mind, foreseeing or presaging, from the depth of knowledge past or present, could have feared how such united force of gods, how such as stood like these, could ever know repulse? For who can yet believe, though after loss, that all these puissant legions, whose exile hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend?
>
> (*Paradise Lost*, I, 626 ff.)

The fact that good verse may be read as prose supports the idea, suggested in the previous chapters, that meter and rhythmical pattern are to a certain extent subjective. When an ideal rhythmic scheme becomes subjectively established in the "ear" of the reader, a large number of slight liberties may be taken with the usual prose value of syllables and with the emphasis of them, in order to make them fit the scheme.

Suppose we reverse our last experiment, and try to turn ordinary prose into verse by merely dividing it into lines and superimposing a rhythmical pattern. Here are a few sentences from the morning paper:

> The Navy football squad, accompanied by the coaches and several academy officers, arrived in this city last night and are at the Hotel Vanderbilt. With the party came the Navy goat, the midshipmen's mascot.

By adding some light stresses we can impose a pattern on

this for a few phrases. We might even divide it into lines of verse, but the lines will be of different meters and different rhythmical patterns. They might each fit well enough in other verse contexts, but they do not agree with one another as they stand. One possibility would be:

The | Navy | football | squad ac- | companied | by
The | coaches and | several a- | cademy | officers,
Ar- | rived in this | city last | night
| And are | at the | Hotel | Vander- | bilt.
| With the | party | came the | Navy | goat,
The | midshipmen's | mascot.

Here we have duple pentameter, triple tetrameter, triple trimeter, two lines of duple pentameter, and one of dimeter, but the combination is not very happy.

Verse, then, can be read as prose, but prose cannot be read as verse, except for rare short passages. Good verse has, in fact, the characteristics of good prose, with other qualities added.

The distinction between the reading of prose and of verse can be carried still further, for there are differences besides those already brought out. The lack of a definite rhythmical pattern, the jumping from accented syllable to accented syllable and slurring whatever is between, causes constant changes in tempo in prose reading. The general tempo of average prose reading, or conversation, is somewhat faster than that of average verse reading.[6] Most readers would, in addition, bring out differences in intensity of emphasis and of pitch in prose and verse reading. Prose has certainly a much wider range in both these respects.[7] All these ele-

[6] This would be true even if the time between two stresses were the same in a given prose reading and a verse reading, for a passage of verse of some length is divided into more time parts than the same passage read as prose. The reader may count these in his own reading of the passage at the beginning of the chapter.

[7] Professor F. N. Scott, in a very interesting paper ("Scansion of Prose Rhythm," *Publications of Modern Language Association*, 1905,

ments—lack of rhythmical pattern and metrical pattern (*i. e.*, the line unit), and a greater variety in tempo, emphasis, and pitch—tend to obscure the time divisions in prose so that we do not perceive them. Therefore we cannot feel from a reading of ordinary prose the increased emotional effect which a consciousness of rhythm gives to language.

There is, however, a kind of fine dignified prose which has an emotional quality and a perceptible rhythm. The difference between the usual reading of the prose of the newspaper and the solemn, measured cadences of Sir Thomas Browne or the Authorized Version of the Bible is easy to perceive but difficult to analyze. The following passage from Ecclesiastes is a good example of "rhythmical prose":

> Remémber nów thy Creátor in the dáys
> of thy youth, when the évil dáys come
> nót nor the yeárs draw nígh when thoú
> shalt sáy, I háve no pleásure ín them.

The first two words in my own reading of the passage start a duple rhythm; from *thy* to *evil* (with the exception of one foot) is in triple rhythm; the rest of the sentence, with the exception of one foot, is in duple rhythm. "Rhythmical prose," then, we may say, has a slightly varied pattern, which, in general, is not superimposed by the addition of light stresses, but which is brought out by the usual accent of the words.[8] There is no struggle between the thought and the superimposed form. There is, too, in any good reading of such passages as the above from the Bible, a dignified measured cadence, an equality of time divisions between

20: 707), finds the rhythm of prose dependent chiefly upon changes in pitch; and that of verse dependent upon equality of time parts marked by stress. He scans sentences of prose in phrase waves of rising and falling pitch.

[8] The present writer, in recording his own reading of the passage just quoted, puts a stress on *thou*, *have*, and *in*. As I have heard several readers do this, I conclude there is a slight tendency to make the rhythm even.

the stressed syllables. To make this clear, compare your reading of the passage just quoted with the following piece of prose:

> Be sure to go to the harbor at the time of the race, when the college men are there, for the town is full of fun and life, though somewhat noisy also.

The average reading of the two passages will have a totally different effect, and yet the distribution of accented and slurred syllables is, in my own reading, exactly the same in both sentences. This may be made more evident by printing them side by side:

Re- | member | now thy Cre- | ator in the
Be | sure to | go to the | harbor at the

| days of thy | youth, when the | evil | days come
| time of the | race, when the | college | men are

| not, nor the | years draw | nigh when | thou shalt
| there, for the | town is | full of | fun and

| say, I | have no | pleasure | in them.
| life, though | somewhat | noisy | also.

It is true that the succession of sounds, what is called tone-color, is not at all the same, but the biblical passage has no words that are unusual, or remarkably beautiful in themselves, and the other sentence is at least free from harsh effects.

This comparison indicates that what we call "rhythmic prose" does not primarily depend for its effect upon a regularity of rhythmic pattern, though the pattern does, of course, determine the particular character of the rhythm. The ideas of these two passages seem to require different readings. The emotional quality of one impels us to give it a measured cadence, to make the time divisions of our reading perceptibly equal. The lack of this quality in the sentence which

merely conveys information makes us fail to give it a measured cadence, or even to bring out distinctly the rhythmic pattern.

That emotional content rather than rhythmic pattern is the important element in "rhythmic prose" may be brought out further by comparing a great sentence of Sir Thomas Browne, that has no evenly rhythmical pattern, with a sentence of somewhat less impressive purport. The distribution and the grouping of the stressed and slurred syllables of both passages is, in the reading of the present writer, identical.

> But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity.
>
> (*Urn Burial.*)

> And the performer on the melodeon gladly satisfied his hearers, and played with a glorious contempt of the requirements of rhythmical sensitivity.

But the in- | iquity of ob- | livion | blindly
And the per- | former on the me- | lodeon | gladly

| scattereth her | poppy, and | deals with the
| satisfied his | hearers, and | played with a

| memory of | men without dis- | tinction to
| glorious con- | tempt of the re- | quirements of

| merit of perpe- | tuity.[9]
| rhythmical sensi- | tivity.

Here again, the chief difference in the unforced reading of the two sentences seems to be in the greater evenness of the time divisions into which our utterance naturally falls

[9] If the reader does not agree with the indicated readings he can try the same experiment for himself by writing some newspaper prose that is accented in a way that corresponds to his own reading of any fine passage from the Bible.

because of the dignity of sentiment in Sir Thomas Browne. The manner of reading the two passages under discussion may, of course, be reversed. The sentence from *Urn Burial* or that from Ecclesiastes may be read flippantly by giving it the casual unevenness of time divisions, of intensity of emphasis, and of pitch that is natural to newspaper or conversational prose. The newspaper sentences may be made broadly comic by incongruously giving them the dignified even time parts into which we divide emotional prose. This second reading will have the absurd effect of much campaign speech-making, or the oratory of college debating teams, in which a change in the income tax is urged in cadences proper to the reading of the Ten Commandments.

The first necessity, then, for the writer of "rhythmical prose" is an elevation of thought which will impel a reader sensitive to the emotion expressed, to make the time between the accented syllables perceptibly equal. This emotional content is not necessary to make us read verse metrically, for, if the poet has made his intention plain, we unconsciously fall into a metrical pattern and sustain it through the poem, even though the subject be as unemotional as an *Essay on Criticism.*

Though dignity of feeling is the necessary basis for prose that is to be read rhythmically, the particular quality of the prose is determined by its rhythmical pattern. The passage quoted from Ecclesiastes, beginning "Remember now thy Creator," varies between duple and triple rhythm. In prose, the same pattern must not be sustained for many phrases, or they will have the evenness of verse rhythm. Notice the monotonous effect of the absolutely unvaried triple rhythm of the following:

> Ethereal strength of the Alps, like a dream, that will vanish in solemn procession beyond the Torcellan horizon; and islands of Paduan hills that are poised in the gold of the west.

The flow of rhythm of the passage as Ruskin wrote it is exquisitely varied:

> Ethereal strength of Alps, dreamlike, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west.
>
> (*Modern Painters*, Part IX, chap. 9.)

The pattern of "rhythmic prose," especially in that of the seventeenth century, very often consists in a parallelism of rhythm, with, or without, a parallelism of thought. In the following passage, the phrases are set apart to illustrate this:

> For man also knoweth not his time:
> as the físhes that are táken in an évil nét,
> and as the bírds that are caúght in the snáre;
> só are the sóns of mén
> snáred in an évil tíme,
> when it falleth suddenly upon them.
>
> (*Ecclesiastes*, IX, 12.)

There is a similarity between the rhythm of the second and third phrases, and another between that of the fourth and fifth. The reader may also, if he chooses, read the sixth phrase in the duple rhythm of the first. Here is another example of parallelism in prose; the two phrases would make two perfect lines of verse in triple rhythm:

> Hé that obsérveth the wínd shall not sów;
> and hé that regárdeth the cloúds shall not reáp.
>
> (*Ecclesiastes*, XI, 4.)

Such exact parallelism, however, as this last example has, and such a long continuance of one pattern is not common even in the more rhythmic parts of the Authorized Version.

The most subtly wrought "rhythmical prose" in our literature is undoubtedly that of Sir Thomas Browne. It has in the highest degree all the qualities of varied pattern,

sonorous vowel sequence, musical alliteration, and even occasionally rime. An analysis of one more sentence from *Urn Burial* will show these characteristics:

> And since death must be the Lucina of life, and even Pagans could doubt, whether thus to live were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes; since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementos, and time that grows old in itself, bids us hope no long duration;—diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Beside the obvious rhetorical balance and periodic structure of the three clauses beginning with *since* and leading to the same concluding clause, there are correspondences between the rhythms of several phrases. This echoing of rhythms through a paragraph justifies the expression "cathedral style" applied to the prose of Sir Thomas Browne. A very exact parallelism occurs between the two following short phrases, which balance two longer phrases that are not in correspondence with each other:

> and mákes but wínter árches,
> and háve our líght in áshes.

Again, the two phrases that precede the final one of the sentence have a similarity in the number of time parts and in their rhythm. The rhythms here are not so perfectly paralleled as those just quoted, but they are as much alike as two successive lines of verse often are:

since the bróther of deáth daíly haúnts us with dýing meméntos,
and tíme that grows óld in itsélf, bids us hópe no lóng durátion.

Individual readers vary so much in their distribution of

prose accents that the writer can point out only the most obvious cases of parallelism, where there would probably be little difference of opinion as to the best reading.[10] Other readers may discover further similarities in the phrase rhythms of the passage.

In one respect, different readers of the sentence will probably agree. This is in the rhythmical close of each phrase. There is an echoing of similar cadences in the last five or six syllables that precede a grammatical pause. The sentence in question is built up on two recurring patterns of phrase cadences, ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / and ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑. In the following list of rhythmical closes, like effects are marked in the same way:

\# ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / Lucina of life
\# ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / even Pagans could doubt
\# ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / to live were to die
\## ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ at right descensions
\## ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ but winter arches
\## ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ lie down in darkness
\## ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ our light in ashes
\### ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ with dying mementos
\# ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / grows old in itself
\## ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ no long duration
\## ⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ of expectation[11]

[10] Dogmatism in such subtle questions of taste seems to me even more out of place in a discussion of prose reading than in a treatment of verse reading, where there is somewhat less chance for a difference in taste. The extreme arbitrariness of the scansions of Professor Saintsbury in his *History of Prose Rhythm* has been commented on by every reader of the book with whom I have talked.

[11] The rhythm of the last phrase would probably lead most readers to put a "light stress" on the first syllable of *expectation*, just as if the word occurred in verse.

This recurrence, with variation, of the rhythmic endings of phrases is one of the characteristics of fine prose. A study of these cadences may make a basis for individualizing the work of different writers. The student who wishes to carry this study further may find interest in comparing the rhythmic endings in the passage just analyzed, with those, for example, in the ninety-first Psalm, or in the third chapter of Habakkuk. He will find such paragraphs of prose built, like those of Sir Thomas Browne, upon three or four recurring cadences. There are four that are strikingly repeated throughout the ninety-first Psalm in the Authorized Version:

1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known my name.

15. He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

The four chief closing rhythms throughout the Psalm (in the reading of the present author) are the following:

(a) the shadow of the Almighty
my refuge and my fortress
shall cover thee with his feathers
ten thousand at thy right hand
most High thy habitation.

(b) I will say of the Lord
in him will I trust
his wings shalt thou trust
for the terror by night
that flieth by day

shall fall at thy side
bear thee up in their hands
I will set him on high
(c) from the snare of the fowler
that walketh in darkness
that wasteth at noonday
the reward of the wicked
the lion and adder
be with him in trouble
(d) thy shield and buckler
which is my refuge
come nigh thy dwelling
hath set his love upon thee
and shew him my salvation

The points brought out in the analysis of all these examples of prose lead to the conclusion that *rhythmical prose* is prose that is read, like verse, with a very perceptible division into approximately equal time parts, but these time parts are not grouped in regularly recurring metrical units (lines) like those of verse. This kind of prose has also an approach to rhythmical pattern, but in the best examples, one pattern is not, as in verse, consistently carried through a whole passage; rather, two or three patterns are irregularly repeated or alternated.

This definition of rhythmical prose will include most of the poetry of Walt Whitman and his followers—what is called *free verse*, or *vers libre*.[12] If we print as free verse one

[12] Walt Whitman himself is credited with saying that the *Leaves of Grass* contains both prose and verse.

of the prose passages we have been discussing we see that the two forms may be in reality the same thing, *e. g.*

> Remember now thy creator
> In the days of thy youth,
> When the evil days come not,
> Nor the years draw nigh
> When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

Or we may treat in the same way a passage from Joseph Conrad's story, *Youth:*

> And this is how I see the East.
> I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul;
> But now I see it always from a small boat,
> A high outline of mountains,
> Blue and afar in the mornings; like a faint mist at noon;
> A jagged wall of purple at sunset.
> I have the feel of the oar in my hand,
> The vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes.
> And I see a bay, a wide bay,
> Smooth as glass and polished like ice,
> Shimmering in the dark.

Compare the general effect of this with Whitman's

> By the bivouac's fitful flame,
> A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow;—
> but first I note,
> The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim outline,
> The darkness, lit by spots of kindled fire—the silence;
> Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving;
> The shrubs and trees, (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily
> watching me)
>
> Which wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous
> thoughts,
> Of life and death—of home and the past and loved, and of thou that
> art far away;
> A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground,
> By the bivouac's fitful flame.

The biblical verse and the Conrad paragraph appear as poems or parts of poems in the manner of the vers libre school. The only difference which printing it in this form can make is that most readers would pause slightly at the end of each line, thus making the rhythmic units more distinct than the phrases were when printed as prose. This, in fact, is what the writers of free verse gain merely by beginning each line with a capital. The feeling that he is reading verse impels the reader to give more attention to rhythm than he does in reading prose. This is merely another indication that verse rhythm is to a very considerable extent subjective.

But some so-called free verse is not as much like rhythmical prose as it is like blank verse. It has a very even rhythmic pattern, though the line length is irregular. Here is a passage in duple rhythm:

Once on a time
There was a little boy: a master mage
By virtue of a Book
Of magic—O, so magical it filled
His life with visionary pomps
Processional! And Powers
Passed with him where he passed. And Thrones
And Dominations, glaived and plumed and mailed,
Thronged in the criss-cross streets,
The palaces pell-mell with playing-fields,
Domes, cloisters, dungeons, caverns, tents, arcades,
Of the unseen, silent City, in his soul
Pavilioned jealously, and hid
As in the dusk, profound,
Green stillnesses of some enchanted mere.

(W. E. Henley: *Arabian Nights.*)

Matthew Arnold, who experimented much with free verse, has a poem, the *Future*, in a perfectly regular triple rhythm, but in irregular unrimed meter.

A wanderer is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship

On the breast of the River of Time.
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light,
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

The freedom of vers libre, then, may be a freedom from rime and from metrical pattern, and it may also be a freedom from regular rhythmical pattern. In the second case it is, except for the manner of printing, identical with rhythmical prose.

The effect of any of the forms defined in this chapter—verse, free verse, rhythmical prose, and ordinary prose—is dependent to a great extent upon the way it is read. A poor reader is likely to ignore the intention of an author and miss a carefully wrought artistic effect. The finest Shakespearian verse when spoken on the stage today usually becomes merely fine rhythmical prose, because most actors seem unable to give it properly expressive interpretation without obscuring the pattern; and the rhythmical prose of Ruskin, Pater, or the Authorized Version may be read to sound like the morning paper.[13]

[13] A more detailed study of free verse will be found in Chapter XIX.

CHAPTER VI

Movement—Phrasing

Compare the effect of the two following lines,

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,

and

Happy field or mossy cavern.

Both are tetrameter, in duple rhythm, and both have eight syllables; but in the former, each unstressed syllable seems to be associated more closely with the stress that follows it than with that which precedes. In the latter, the reverse is true. The difference is due to what we may call the *movement* of the rhythm. There are two kinds of movement, rising and falling. *Rising movement* is illustrated by

The stag at eve had drunk his fill.

This kind of rhythm we may compare with that of a hammer driving a nail; a preparatory lifting comes before the stroke. *Falling movement* is illustrated by

Happy field or mossy cavern.

This kind of rhythm we may compare with that of a typewriter key, which rebounds after being pressed.

Below are quoted six passages of verse that have each a separate and distinctive rhythmic effect when read. This is due to the combination of a rising or falling movement with one of three types of rhythmical pattern distinguished in the fourth chapter.[1] For convenience we may as well call

[1] Quadruple rhythm has not been used enough as yet in serious verse to have its possibilities well developed. It appears at present to be used only with a rising movement.

these effects by the names usually applied in classical prosody.

1. *Iambic lines* (Duple rhythm with rising movement):

At | midnight | in the | month of | June, [2]
I | stand be- | neath the | mystic | moon.
An | opiate | vapor, | dewy, | dim,
Ex- | hales from | out her | golden | rim.
(Poe: *Sleeper.*)

2. *Trochaic lines* (duple rhythm with falling movement):

| Honor, | riches, | marriage- | blessing,
| Long con- | tinuance, | and in- | creasing
| Hourly | joys be | still u- | pon you!
| Juno | sings her | blessings | on you.
(*The Tempest*, IV, 1.)

3. *Anapestic lines* (triple rhythm with rising movement):

The As- | syrian came | down like a | wolf on the | fold,
And his | cohorts were | gleaming in | purple and | gold;
And the | sheen of their | spears was like | stars on the | sea,
Where the | blue wave rolls | nightly on | deep Gali | lee.
(Byron: *Hebrew Melodies.*)

4. *Dactylic lines* (triple rhythm with falling movement):

| Warriors and | chiefs! Should the | shaft or the | sword
| Pierce me in | leading the | host of the | Lord,
| Heed not the | corse, though a | King's, in your | path:
| Bury your | steel in the | bosoms of | Gath!
(Byron: *Song of Saul before his Last Battle.*)

5. *Iambic-anapestic lines* (duple-triple rhythm with rising movement):

The | sea is at | ebb and the | sound of her | utmost | word,

[2] It is to be noted that movement has nothing to do with the division into time parts; for instance, *of* in the first line quoted, is more closely associated with *June* in the following foot than with *month*, which is part of the same foot.

Is | soft as a | least wave's | lapse on a | still small | reach.
From | bay unto | bay on | quest of a | goal de- | ferred,
From | headland | ever to | headland and | beach to | beach,
When | earth gives | ear to the | message that | all days | preach.
(Swinburne: *Seaboard.*)

6. *Trochaic-dactylic lines*[3] (duple-triple rhythm with falling movement):

| Surely the | thought in a | man's heart | hopes or | fears
| Now that for- | getfulness | needs must | here have | stricken
| Anguish and | sweetened the | sealed-up | springs of | tears. . .
(Swinburne: *Century of Roundels.*)

Differences in movement in the same rhythm depend wholly upon whether a line begins with direct attack[4] or not. This will be clear to the reader if he reads examples 1, 2, and 3, covering the syllables before the first bars.

| Midnight | in the | month of | June,
| Cohorts were | gleaming in | purple and | gold,
| Soft as a | least wave's | lapse on a | still small | reach,

would all fit perfectly into the movement of examples 4, 5, and 6. On the other hand, prefixing a syllable to any line in examples 4, 5, and 6, as,

All | honor | riches, | marriage- | blessing,
With | long con- | tinuance, | and in- | creasing,

or,

With a | hail to the | chief who in | triumph ad- | vances,

or,

O, | surely the | thought in a | man's heart | hopes or | fears,

changes it to rising movement like the examples 1, 2, and 3.

Evidently, then, the way that movement is indicated by

[3] In classical prosody called logaoedic.
[4] *See above*, p. 21.

the method of scansion used in this book is by showing whether a line begins with direct attack or not, *i. e.*, whether or not the first bar is preceded by a syllable. The fact that movement is determined entirely by the beginning of a line is illustrated by an amusing incident in the life of Handel, as told by his librettist Morell:

> And as to the last air I cannot help telling you that when Mr. Handel first read it he cried out, "Damn your iambics!" "Don't put yourself in a passion, they are easily trochees." "Trochees, what are trochees?" "Why, the very reverse of iambics, by leaving out a syllable in every line, as instead of 'Convey me to some peaceful shore,' 'Lead me to some peaceful shore.'" "That is what I want." "I will step into the parlour, and alter them immediately."[5]

A rising movement may be set up by beginning the line with either one or two syllables. For instance, there is no difference in movement whether the poet writes,

> At midnight in the month of June,

or,

> And at midnight in the month of June.

Similarly,

> And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold,

may be abbreviated to

> His cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.

without change in movement.

Evidently then, since a movement is established purely by whether a line begins with direct attack or not, the sense of movement becomes subjective after it is once estab-

[5] Quoted in Streatfeild's *Handel* (N. Y., 1909).

lished. For instance, you may repeat the syllables ta-ta-ta-ta-, etc., starting with a trochaic movement, thus: | ta-ta | ta-ta | ta-ta | ta-ta | ta-ta | ta-ta | ta-ta and find presently, after five or six feet, that you have unconsciously fallen into an iambic movement, thus:

ta - | ta ta - | ta ta - | ta ta . . . etc.

Or, you may consciously change from one to the other at will. Two people may hear the same watch ticking, one iambically, the other trochaically. This unstable character of movement, joined with the fact that we seem to have an instinctive preference for rising over falling movement, is a point that the poet must bear constantly in mind, when writing in a falling movement. The methods of sustaining trochaic and dactylic effects will be taken up in chapters XVI and XVII.

Before going further with the subject of movement, an understanding of what is meant by phrasing will be necessary.

Phrasing is the grouping of words closely related by their sense or their grammatical association. In the following passage, the four phrases of which it is composed are divided by commas:

My good blade carves the casques of men, ||
My tough lance thrusteth sure, ||
My strength is as the strength of ten, ||
Because my heart is pure.
(Tennyson: *Sir Galahad.*)

Here the phrasing exactly coincides with the meter so that the lines stand out as separate units. In the next passage the phrasing also coincides with the line structure, but each line is composed of two or more phrases divided by cesural pauses:

Ill fares the land, || to hastening ills a prey, ||
Where wealth accumulates, || and men decay: ||

Princes and lords || may flourish, || or may fade— ||
A breath can make them, || as a breath has made.
(Goldsmith: *Deserted Village.*)

Phrasing is very often in conflict with meter so that the line structure, through some passages, is slightly obscured to the listener. This is particularly true of blank verse of the Miltonic type, *e. g.*

|| Yet from these flames
No light; || but rather || darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe, ||
Regions of sorrow, || doleful shades, || where peace
And rest can never dwell, || hope never comes ||
That comes to all, || but torture without end
Still urges, || and a fiery deluge, || fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed. ||
(Milton: *Paradise Lost*, I, 62 ff.)

Making the phrases run over the line, as they do in all but two lines of this passage, is called *enjambment.* Notice especially the line division of such phrases as "*where peace and rest can never dwell,*" or, "*fed with ever burning sulphur unconsumed.*"

Changes in phrasing are one of the means of adding variety to versification, when such variety is considered desirable. Whether phrasing should coincide with meter or should be in conflict with it depends upon the form of verse under consideration, and often upon the taste of the poet or of the age. In the sonnet, for example, these two forces are usually coincident, but in good blank verse they are always at variance to some extent. It is purely the degree to which this enjambment is carried that constitutes the difference among the various types of pentameter couplet written in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. This matter will be taken up later in the discussion of the separate verse forms.

Quite as important as the relation of phrasing to *meter* is

its support of, or conflict with, *movement*. This phase, which is considerably more subtle than the one just treated, is significant in connection with all forms of verse. The relation of phrasing to movement depends upon the fact that prose phrases have a movement of their own in ordinary speech. We saw in the previous chapter, that there may be an approach to an equality of time divisions in prose speech, but no regular rhythmical pattern for more than very short stretches. In brief expressions, however, and in the short phrases of which longer prose passages are composed, there is rhythmical pattern and movement. For instance, the expression, *The roád to New Yórk is nót very goód*, iambic-anapestic in character, and *Meet me at hálf-past séven tomórrow*, is trochaic-dactylic.

To illustrate this further, we may name the movements in phrases after the corresponding rhythmical movements, and supplement these with other terms taken from classical prosody:

/ / / /
Great, just, good God—spondaic, or monosyllabic phrasing

⏑ / ⏑ /
can never dwell—iambic phrasing

/ ⏑ / ⏑
ever-burning—trochaic phrasing

⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ /
by the shadowy stream—anapestic phrasing

/ ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑
glorious cataract—dactylic phrasing

Besides these, we may recognize the amphibrach (⏑ / ⏑ *a handful*), but this type of phrase rarely keeps its individuality. Two or three amphibrachs in succession, like "⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ *a handful of faded* ⏑ / ⏑ *carnations*," may have an anapestic or dactylic effect, according to what precedes. Of course, phrases like "⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ *with jollity*," or "⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ *in the library*" often occur, but unless they are repeated, as in "⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ *in the evening by the twilight*," they may be resolved into one of the effects classified above.

The agreement or conflict of the rhythmical movement and the phrasing may bring about either monotony or variety in verse, and produce many interesting and often startling effects.

Here are a number of examples of different relations of phrasing and rhythmical movement in short passages:

Iambic movement supported by iambic phrasing:

> And pass his days in peace among his own.
> (Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

> The weight of all the hopes of half the world.
> (Tennyson: *Princess.*)

> Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead.
> (*Romeo and Juliet,* IV, 5.)

> And streams and clouds and suns and birds and trees.
> (Lanier: *Symphony.*)

The same effect, but less marked, by using fewer monosyllables:

> For brief repast or afternoon repose,
> (Tennyson: *Guinevere.*)

Such coincidence of iambic movement and phrasing for several lines in succession gives an effective emphasis:

> And rolling far along the gloomy shores
> The voice of days of old and days to be.
> (Tennyson: *Passing of Arthur.*)

If this is carried on for a number of lines without any particular reason for it in the sense of the passage, the effect is heavy and very monotonous.

Direct conflict of iambic movement with trochaic phrasing may be illustrated by:

> The desert, forest, cavern, breakers' foam.
> (Byron: *Childe Harold,* III.)

On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffon, swan.
(Tennyson: *Holy Grail.*)

And if I give thee honor due, . . .
And at my window bid good-morrow.
(Milton: *L'Allegro.*)

The effect of this conflict is very strikingly made use of in the last phrase of the passage from *Paradise Lost* quoted a few pages back:

but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever burning sulphur unconsumed.

Iambic movement in conflict with spondaic phrasing may give a certain emphasis and a dignified slowness to a line:[6]

Before high piled books in charactery
Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain;
When I behold upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance . . .
(Keats: *When I have fears.*)

This slowing up of the line may also give a sense of obstruction and difficulty, as in,

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw
The line too, labors and the words move slow
(Pope: *Essay on Criticism,* II.)

O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death.
(Milton: *Paradise Lost,* II, 620.)

Iambic movement in conflict with anapestic phrasing:

Made lightenings in the splendor of the moon
(Tennyson: *Passing of Arthur.*)

[6] This, of course, is the same as "extra stress." *See* the other examples above, p. 15.

Iambic movement in conflict with dactylic phrasing:

Hurled as a stone from out of a catapult
(Tennyson: *Passing of Arthur.*)

'Phosphorous,' then 'Meridies'—'Hesperus'
(Tennyson: *Gareth and Lynette.*)

Trochaic movement supported by trochaic phrasing:

Honor, riches, marriage,—blessing
(*The Tempest.*)

Wave-kissed marble roundly dimpling
Gently rising, gently sinking.
(George Eliot: *Spanish Gipsy.*)

The support of this movement by phrasing makes more marked the rapid and somewhat abrupt effect that is characteristic of trochaic lines.[7]

Trochaic movement in conflict with iambic phrasing:

If with voice of words or prayers thy sons may reach thee
We thy latter sons, the men of after-birth.
(Swinburne: *Litany of Nations.*)

Anapestic movement supported by anapestic phrasing:

We have in our hands the shining
And the fire in our hearts of a star.
(Swinburne: *Halt before Rome.*)

An immeasurable infinite flower of the dark that dilates and expands.
(Swinburne: *Garden of Cymodoce.*)

We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still.
(Tennyson: *Maud.*)

In the following, the phrasing and movement are both iambic-anapestic:

[7] *See* Chapter XVI.

We have made no vows—there will none be broke,
Our love was free as the wind on the hill,
There was no word said we need wish unspoke,
We have wrought no ill.
(Ernest Dowson: *April Love.*)

Anapestic movement with amphibrach phrasing:

I galloped, Dirk galloped, we galloped all three.
(Browning: *How we brought the Good News.*)

Lines with dactylic movement supported by dactylic phrasing are rare. The following illustrations approach this:

Wood-flower, sea-flower, star-flower rare, . . .
Who are they, what are they, whence have they come to us? . . .
Nobody ever yet proved your utility.
(Carmen and Hovey: *More Songs from Vagabondia.*)

Dactylic movement with anapestic phrasing:

Spread in the sight of the lion
Surely, we said, is the net
Spread but in vain, and the snare
Vain; for the light is awake. . . .
(Swinburne: *Halt Before Rome.*)

Dactylic movement with amphibrach phrasing:

Theirs be the music, the color, the glory, the gold;
Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of mould
Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the cold.[3]
(John Masefield: *A Consecration.*)

The conflict of phrasing with movement may be purely a rhythmic effect to prevent monotony, or it may be an additional ornament of imitative or suggestive sound and motion. The above examples read with their contexts will illustrate both uses.

[3] This third line is anapestic both in movement and phrasing—an interesting variation from the preceding lines.

The following quotation from Milton shows how the principle of agreement and conflict is carried out in longer passages:

> That proud honor claimed
> Azazel as his right, a cherub tall:
> Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
> The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
> Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
> With gems and golden luster rich emblazed,
> Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
> Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
> At which the universal host up-sent
> A shout that tore Hell's conclave, and beyond
> Frightened the reign of Chaos and old Night.

In the phrasing of this passage, printed below, when two successive phrases continue the same movement of their own they are printed together. The reader in studying this phrasing must bear in mind that the rhythm of the whole passage, which is blank verse, is normally iambic (⏑ / ⏑ / ⏑ /).

1 That proud honor claimed Azazel,
2 as his right;
3, 4 a cherub tall: Who forthwith
5, 6 from the glittering staff unfurled The imperial ensign;
7 which, full high advanced,
8 Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
9, 10 With gems and golden luster || rich emblazed,
11 Seraphic arms and trophies;
12 all the while
13 Sonorous metal
14 blowing martial sounds:
15, 16 At which || the universal host up-sent A shout
17 that tore Hell's conclave,
18 and beyond
19 Frightened the reign of Chaos and old Night.

The passage here, taken from its context, which has an already established iambic rhythm, begins with a trochaic

phrase. This is checked by the simple anapest, *as his right,* and, the next two phrases, the 3rd and 4th, being iambic, restore the agreement of movement and phrasing. The 5th and 6th phrases are anapestic, suggestive of the subject. The 7th, *full high advanced,* again restores the iambic. The 8th phrase is dactylic, but easily runs into anapestic at the end of the line. The next two lines and a half (phrases 9-13) except for the 12th phrase, bring us back into agreement with the basic iambic character of the poem, which has been greatly endangered by the direct conflict of the phrasing of the preceding lines. The ending of the 13th phrase leads into the strong trochaic effect of the 14th, *blowing martial sounds.* The 15th and 16th restore the iambic for a moment. The spondaic character of the 17th gives a stirring emphasis, which leads to a complete smashing of the established rhythm and movement, again suggestive of the subject, in the remarkable line that closes the verse paragraph,

Frightened the reign of Chaos and old Night.

One of the pleasures the reader has in great verse like this is the alternating struggle and agreement of the ever varying phrasing of the poet, with the movement which, when once established, is constantly present subjectively to the reader.

The whole matter of phrasing is inexact; it cannot be classified and discussed with the precision that meter can, for different readers will feel a different movement in the same prose phrase. The general principle of its support of, or conflict with both meter and movement, is, however, of the utmost importance; for it is by means of phrasing that the poets have produced some of the finest effects in our verse. It is through phrasing that the individuality of verse stands out, and makes it possible for the student to distinguish easily the work of Shakespeare from that of Milton, or Browning, or Tennyson, even when the poems compared are in the same meter and rhythmical pattern. There will be occasion to say more on this subject later.

CHAPTER VII

Rime

The greater part of English verse since Chaucer is rimed.[1] The only important exception is blank verse (unrimed iambic pentameter). Besides this, there are a few scattered examples such as the hexameters of Clough and Longfellow, Browning's *One Word More*, Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, Swinburne's *Sapphics*, etc. Tennyson's *Tears, Idle Tears* is an exceptionally beautiful use of lyric blank verse:

> Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
> Tears from the depth of some divine despair
> Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
> In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
> And thinking of the days, that are no more.
>
> Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
> That brings our friends up from the underworld,
> Sad as the last which reddens over one
> That sinks with all we love below the verge,
> So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Other interesting unrimed lyrics are Collins's *Ode to Evening*, Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces*, and Longfellow's *Bells of Lynn*.

Rime, as used by the majority of English versifiers, may be defined as *the identity, or close similarity, of sounds at the ends of two or more lines of verse.* The stressed vowels and all consonants that follow should be alike, or very

[1] The origin of rime in the poetry of modern Europe has been variously attributed to Arabian, Celtic, and Medieval Latin verse by different investigators. Others hold that it may be indigenous to several literatures. These theories are summarized in C. F. Richardson's *A Study of English Rhyme*. Hanover: 1909, pp. 34-66.

nearly alike; and the preceding consonants should be different. For instance, *feel: heal; feeling: healing; feelingly: healingly* are rimes. *Meant* and *lament*, however, are not sanctioned by the best usage. Such rimes are called *identical rimes*. *Prate, crate* and *great* are not considered identical rimes, for double consonants (pr, cr, gr, sl, pl, bl, etc.), as far as rime is concerned, count as single. As rime is a matter that concerns the ear and not the eye, *eight, skate,* and *bait* satisfy us, but *through* and *plough* do not.

Rimes to lines ending with stress are called *masculine, e. g.*

Come and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastic toe.

Rimes to lines with light endings are called *feminine,* or *double rimes,*[2] *e. g.*

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures.

Rimes to lines with a double feminine ending are called *triple,* or *trisyllabic rimes, e. g.*

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!
(Hood: *Bridge of Sighs.*)

Since the beginning of rimed verse in English the theory has been that rime should exactly fit the definition stated above; the practice of poets, however, has at times varied far from this. Because certain important common words, *home, heaven, river,* etc., have few satisfactory rimes, it has become customary to accept *come, even,* and *ever* as mates for them. Tennyson, for instance, has paired *more: poor; curse: horse; wood: flood; own: crown; tune: moon;*

[2] Also called penultimate rimes.

one: alone: gone; waist: rest; stars: wars. Changes like these on the riming vowel have been used occasionally by all the great English poets. Professor Richardson, in his *Study of English Rhyme,* has made very interesting lists of these variations in representative poets from the beginning of the use of rime to the present day. These lists give one the impression that the poets have treated rime in a very casual and negligent way, but one must remember that Professor Richardson's book is chiefly a study of the exceptions to exact usage, and that most great poets have been consistently careful in their rimes.

There are one or two imperfect rimes which have become conventions in verse. For example, it is not uncommon to find *by* rimed with silent*ly,* heaven*ly,* etc., and *come* rimed with *home.* These were formerly correct rimes which the poets have been slow to relinquish even though changes in pronunciation have made them imperfect. In the case of *wind* riming with *find, mind,* etc., we actually preserve in verse reading an older pronunciation which long ago became obsolete in prose. Pope's riming *join* with *wine,* and *tea* with *obey* was in accordance with the pronunciation of his period.

Aside from a few such cases, what variation in rime may be permitted is purely a matter of individual taste, not something about which one can dogmatize. The usage of the best poets very rarely allows a change in the consonants, though the vowels may be lengthened, shortened, or even altered. Mrs. Browning, whose fondness for false rimes led her into unpardonable vagaries, is guilty of *ladies: babies; angels: candles; burden: disregarding; calmly: palm-tree; Goethe: duty; panther: saunter; valleys: palace.*

Surely Pope could not bring against Mrs. Browning this criticism which he brought against his contemporaries:

> While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
> With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
> Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"

In the next line it "whispers through the trees;"
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep,"
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with "sleep."

Hackneyed rimes such as *love: dove; poet: know it; bower: flower; soil: toil; fair: hair,* which give a very commonplace tone to a poem, are to be avoided.

In contemporary poetry there is a tendency toward slight variations in rime. Such poets as William Butler Yeats and Wilfred Scawen Blunt feel that perfect rimes are too easy, and that most of the interesting combinations of them have been already used too much. They find a particular charm in the echoes and suggestions of rime in such work as the following:

When I hear others speak of this and that
In our fools' lives which might have better gone,
Complaining idly of too niggard fate
And wishing still their senseless past undone,
I feel a childish tremor through me run,
Stronger than reason, lest by some far chance
Fate's ear to our sad plaints should yet be won
And these our lives be thrown back on our hands.
I tremble when I think of my past years,
My hopes, my aims, my wishes. All these days
I might have wandered far from love and thee.
But kind fate held me, heedless of my prayers,
A prisoner to its wise mysterious ways,
And forced me to thy feet—ah fortunate me!
(W. S. Blunt: *Love Sonnets of Proteus,* IV.)

Emily Dickinson's fondness for imperfect rimes is part of the strange fragmentary suggestiveness of her style.

There are a few words in English that have no exact rimes. Persons who delight in writing letters to the newspapers, from time to time triumphantly announce that they have found mates for some of them, but these are always imperfect and rather useless rimes. Such words are, *April,*

August, chimney, coif, crimson,[3] *forest, microcosm, month, nothing, open, orange, rhomb, scarce, scarf, silver, statue, squirrel, temple, widow, window.*

Rime is not only a musical embellishment to verse, but a very useful aid as well. It gives the listener the pleasure of expectancy in the recurrence of sounds according to a definite scheme. It helps him remember verses more easily. It defines the metrical pattern of a form so that the listener may know at once whether to expect tetrameter or pentameter or octameter as a recurring meter. In this way arrangements of rimes make a great number of stanza forms possible and add enormously to variety in verse.

A further possibility of the use of rime is to bring out emphatically the important words of a poem. Tennyson's *St. Agnes' Eve*, one of the most perfect poems in the language, is a fine illustration of this. Here is the second stanza:

> As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
> To yonder shining ground;
> As this pale taper's earthly spark,
> To yonder argent round;
> So shows my soul before the Lamb,
> My spirit before thee,
> So in mine earthly house I am,
> To that I hope to be.
> Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
> Thro' all yon starlight keen,
> Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
> In raiment white and clean.

Byron's *Isles of Greece* furnishes another example of emphasis through rime:

> The mountains look on Marathon—
> And Marathon looks on the sea;
> And musing there an hour alone,
> I dream'd that Greece might still be free;

[3] *See below*, p. 92, Browning's rime for *crimson*.

For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

These two instances show also the possibilities of antithesis in the terminal words. Pope, the great master of antithesis and epigram, with consummate art made his rimes serve his purpose:

But when his own great work is but begun
What reason weaves, by passion is undone . . .

Passions, like elements, though born to fight,
Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite:
These 'tis enough to temper and employ;
But what composes man can man destroy?
(*Essay on Man*, II.)

The most constant use of antithesis in Pope is in the single line, between the word before the cesura and the rime word, *e. g.*

Alike in what it gives and what denies . . .

All are parts of one stupendous whole . . .
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.
(*Essay on Man*, I.)

Two principles in human nature reign,
Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain . . .
(*Essay on Man*, II.)

If the poet does not choose to make use of the emphasis of rime, he may rime the less important words, and phrase the passage so that the rime is scarcely evident. In Keats's *Endymion* it has become an ornament only apparent to an ear very sensitive to rime. Many persons are quite familiar with Browning's *My Last Duchess* without realizing that it is written in rimed couplets:

That is my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolph's hands
Worked busily a day and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolph" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance. . . .

Sometimes the useful functions of rime—its use in the architectonics of a poem—are subordinate to the desire for musical embellishment. *Internal rime* is a case of this. The use of an internal rime in the following selections is more for musical effect than for emphasis of the thought.

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the fair and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

(Poe: *Raven.*)

We stood there enchanted—and O the delight of
The sight of the stars and the moon and the sea
And the infinite skies of that opulent night of
Purple and gold and ivory.

(J. W. Riley: *Moon Drowned.*)

Beside discussing the uses and purpose of rime we may say something of its possible arrangements. Rimes are commonly arranged in pairs, or couplets (*aa, bb, cc, dd,* etc.), or else alternately (*abab*). There may be variations and combinations of these two principles, such as, *ababab; ababcc; aabcbc; bababcc,* etc. In quatrains, alternate lines are sometimes left unrimed, thus, *xaya.* When the poet uses a rime scheme that is more complicated than those mentioned, he must remember that rimes cannot be easily recognized when more than three lines intervene, unless these lines should be couplets, or a quatrain.

The sestet of Rossetti's sonnet, *House of Life*, LXXI, *The Choice*, is an example. The rime scheme is *abccba:*

> Now kiss and think that there are really those,
> My own high-bosomed beauty, who increase
> Vain gold, vain love, and yet might choose one way!
> Through many years they toil; then on a day
> They die not,—for their life was death,—but cease;
> And round their narrow lips the mould falls close.

Other possible schemes would be *abcbca* and *abbcca*. The effect of this last may be heard in the following seven line stanza:

> Let no man ask thee anything
> Not year-born between Spring and Spring.
> More of all worlds than he can know,
> Each day the simple sun doth show:
> O trustier gloss than thou canst give
> From all wise scrolls demonstrative,
> The sea doth sigh and the wind sing.
> (Rossetti: *Soothsay.*)

This echoing of a rime already satisfied (*anything: Spring: sing*) is called *tail rime*. It is very common in stanzas of five or more lines.

For a study of exquisitely interwoven rimes the odes of Keats are admirable examples. The *Ode on a Grecian Urn* has for its rime scheme, *ababcdedce*:

> O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede
> Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
> With forest branches and the trodden weed;
> Thou silent form! dost tease us out of thought
> As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
> When old age shall this generation waste,
> Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
> Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

The rime scheme is not exactly the same in every stanza of this ode, but there is no line left hanging without a rime. To leave lines unrimed in a complicated scheme is an annoyance to the reader. The occasional unrimed lines in Gray's odes hold the ear in expectation which is never satisfied. Another principle is that the same rime can hardly be used for more than four lines in succession without a comic effect. Christina Rossetti, however, in her *Passing Away*, has written twenty-six lines on a serious theme, using only one rime. Such eccentric attempts are monotonous and unsuccessful. Identical non-riming endings like *perfuming, spring, blooming, sing* are annoying, and give the impression of careless writing.

Feminine rimes are not used as much as masculine. In most poems they are an occasional variation, or else used alternately with masculine. When they occur in quatrains they are more usual at the ends of the first and third lines, as,

Hark! hark my soul! Angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields, and ocean's wave beat shore;
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
Of that new life when sin shall be no more!

(*Hymnal.* F. W. Faber.)

When feminine rimes are used on the second and fourth lines of quatrains, if the theme is of a light nature, they impart an additional affectation of carelessness, as in,

Fair Cloe blush'd: Euphelia frown'd:
I sung, and gazed; I played and trembled:
And Venus to the lovers around
Remarked how ill we all dissembled.

(Prior.)

An example of a similar disposition of feminine rimes in serious verse can be found in Charles Wolf's *Burial of Sir John*

Moore, but this is a rare exception, and in duple-triple rhythm:

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

Except in short lyrics, feminine rimes are not used consecutively. Mrs. Browning has given us a very good example of their effect:

It is a place where poets crowned may feel the hearts' decaying,
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying:
Yet let the grief and humbleness, as low as silence languish!
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

O poets! from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!
O Christians! at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was clinging,
O men! this man in brotherhood your weary path beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling.

(E. B. Browning: *Cowper's Grave.*)

Coleridge said that "double and trisyllable rimes form a lower species of wit, and, attended to exclusively for their own sake, may become a source of momentary amusement." This judgment is rather hard on Byron and Browning, who are especially fond of the unexpected turn given by these grotesque rimes.

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education,
Or gentlemen, who, though well born and bred,
Grow tired of scientific conversation;
I don't choose to say much upon this head,
I'm a plain man and in a single station,
But—oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-pecked you all?

(*Don Juan.*)

Here are a few of Browning's word-matings: *cup more rose: up morose; can know: piano; eye-holes: viols; from mice: promise; fondly there: beyond lie three; fortunes: short tunes; Pacchierotto: paint-pot—O; ranunculus: Tommy-make-room-for-your-Uncle us.*

Such rimes when not frankly humorous, are in doubtful taste, for they call attention to their own ingenuity, and put undue emphasis on unimportant words. Of course, we enjoy Lowell's exuberant riming in,

> . . . Quite irresistible
> Like a man with eight trumps in his hand at a whist table
> (I thought me at first that the rime was untwistable,
> Though I might have lugged in an allusion to Christabel.

But do such rimes as the following contribute to our appreciation of Browning's *Flight of the Duchess?*

> What signified hats if they had no rims on,
> Each standing before and behind like a scallop,
> And able to serve at sea for a shallop,
> Loaded with lacquer and looped with crimson?
> So that the deer now, to make a short rhyme on't,
> What with our Venerers, Prickers and Verderers,
> Might hope for real hunters at length and not murderers,
> And oh the Duke's tailor, he had a hot time on't!

One more thing to mention with regard to rime is that it very often forces a versifier to write things he had no intention of saying. Old Samuel Butler said,

> rhyme the rudder is of verses,
> With which like ships they steer their courses.
> (*Hudibras* 1, 1.)

With the amateur and minor poet this is certainly true. The weak versifier has to pad his line with far-fetched similes and allusions to satisfy the exigencies of rime. Better a false rime than a padded verse. The early work of Keats

shows that at first, even he felt the restraint of poetic form. In the fragment, *Calidore*, he wrote,

> Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,
> Before the point of his light shallop reaches
> Those marble steps,

and again,

> There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair
> Of his proud horse's mane: he was withal
> A man of elegance and stature tall.

An example of immature workmanship of this sort, corrected by later revision is brought out by a comparison of the version of the first stanza of Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel* as it appeared in *The Germ* in 1850 with that of the volume, *Poems*, of 1870:

> The blessed damozel leaned out
> From the gold bar of heaven;
> Her blue deep eyes were deeper much
> Than a deep water, even.
> She had three lilies in her hand,
> And the stars in her hair were seven.
>
> (1850.)
>
> Her eyes were deeper than the depth
> Of waters stilled at even.
>
> (1870.)

Though we regard such blemishes as those in Keats's early work as faults of technique, we cannot deny that the riming dictionary has been the source of a great deal of "poetic thought" even among our greatest singers. Professor Richardson in a most amusing essay on this subject,[4] says: "Wordsworth in (the *Ode to Duty*), and Swinburne, elsewhere, are alike in discovering that *rod* is one of the very few available rhymes for *God*. Both awkwardly force it into

[4] "The Morals of the Rhyming Dictionary." *Yale Review*, 2, 269 (1913).

place, Wordsworth calling duty a rod to check the erring, and Swinburne declaring that 'a creed is a rod.' Neither statement would have been made save in obedience to that Stern Daughter, the Rhyming Dictionary.

"Poe was brought against a similar grim wall of rhyming necessity when he was forced to make *people* dwell up in the *steeple*. . . . His most frank abandonment of the search for the magic word was in *Fairy Land*:

> In the morning they arise,
> And their moving covering
> Is soaring to the skies
> With the tempests as they toss,
> Like—almost any thing—
> Or a yellow albatross.

We may close this discussion of rime with another quotation from the shrewd old satirist Butler:

> But those that write in rhyme still make
> The one verse for the other's sake;
> For one for sense, and one for rhyme,
> I think's sufficient at one time.

Another adornment of verse, which may be called a kind of rime, is *assonance*. This is a similarity between only the vowel sounds of different words, the consonants being disregarded; *e. g., give: thick: fish: swim; sell: step: net.* Assonance was used in Provençal and Old French poetry, and still continues in Spanish. In English, it occurs intentionally only in forms imitating the meters of these languages. An example of this very rare type of ornament is George Eliot's Song of Juan in the *Spanish Gipsy:*

> Maiden crowned with glossy blackness,
> Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
> Long-armed næad, when she dances,
> On the stream of ether floating,—
> Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Form all curves like softness drifted,—
  Wæve-kissed marble roundly dimpling,
Far-off music slowly wingèd,
  Gently rising, gently sinking,—
    Bright, O bright Fedalma!

To appreciate anything so exotic as this one must cultivate an ear for it, just as for the experiments with classical quantities made by Robert Bridges.

Assonance has been used for rime frequently in the free and easy versifying of the old ballads; and many of the doubtful rimes quoted in this chapter from Mrs. Browning and others are really cases of assonance. Unintentional assonance between succeeding rimes offends the ear and shows lack of finish. One of Keats's early attempts is guilty of this blemish:

Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream;
Or a rapt Seraph in a moonlight beam;
Or again witness what with thee I've seen,
The dew of fairy feet swept from the green,
After a night of some quaint jubilee
Which every elf and fay had come to see.
(*Epistle to G. F. Mathew.*)

CHAPTER VIII

Melody or Tone-Color

Every reader of poetry knows the experience of being haunted by lines or stanzas of a peculiarly satisfying beauty. His analysis of the rhythm and of the imagery evoked may fail to discover the reason for this appeal. There seems to be a magic in the sheer sound of the words which exalts certain passages of English verse into the order of preëminent excellence. This melody in words, which makes phrases like, *"Trailing clouds of glory," "in fairy lands forlorn," "A damsel with a dulcimer,"* stand out in our memories, is called tone-color.[1] We hear it in lines like,

> Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
> In Vallombrosa.
>
> (*Paradise Lost.*)

> Where the bright seraphim in burning row
> Their loud uplifted Angel trumpets blow.
>
> (Milton: *At a Solemn Music.*)

> O wild West Wind, Thou breath of Autumn's being.
>
> (Shelley: *Ode to West Wind.*)

> O my Luve's like a red, red rose
> That's newly sprung in June.
>
> (Burns: *A Red Red Rose.*)

Melody, or tone-color, in verse, is the same thing as timbre or quality in music—the characteristic which distinguishes the tone of the flute, violin, or cornet when producing notes of the same pitch, duration, and intensity. It is by their peculiarly individual timbre that we chiefly recognize different sounds; that we can tell two peals of bells apart, or

[1] Adopted from German *tonklang, tonfarbe*

distinguish the voices of our friends. It is for the production of an individual timbre in his instrument that the virtuoso strives.

This melodic quality in verse is one of the five oranges which Stevenson's juggler, the poet, must keep in the air at the same time.[2] Two of the other four, the form of the sentence and the choice of the exact word for the meaning, do not concern the study of versification; the remaining two, the rhythm of the phrase and the movement of the verse pattern, have already been discussed. The difference in sensitiveness of readers to certain of these elements is what causes such diversity of opinion and preference in regard to the poets. A reader who cares more for variation in the rhythm of the individual line than for sweeps of rhythm through a verse paragraph, or for the sheer melody of words, will hold the blank verse of Shakespeare higher than that of Milton. And all of Poe and Lanier and much of Coleridge and Swinburne will fail to interest a reader deaf to tone-color.

Tone-color in poetry is a general name for all the technical embellishment of sound effects. It includes the obvious devices of rime, the repetition of words, the use of refrain lines or refrain stanzas; the less obvious ornaments of alliteration, assonance, onomatopœia; and the extremely subtle effects of vowel and consonantal sequence. The use of rime and assonance at the ends of lines was discussed in the last chapter; they will be taken account of here only in relation to the other elements of melody.

The *repetition of words and phrases* is a rhetorical device that must be used but sparingly in prose, but in verse it may become an important and frequently occurring trick of technique. In the old ballads the repeating of a phrase with some slight addition—what is called "incremental repetition"—was perhaps originally the result of seeking rimes in rapid composition, but it has come to be one of the marks of the ballad style, *e. g.*

[2] Stevenson: *On the Technical Element of Style in Literature.*

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit
Wi' their gowd kames in their hair,
A-waiting for their ain dear loves!
For them they'll see nae mair.

(*Sir Patrick Spens.*)

Incremental repetition is used in modern verse chiefly in imitations of the archaic ballad manner, in such poems as *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel.* The repetition of single words, however, has been very widely used by numerous poets as a device for linking together the lines of a stanza. This iteration of an identical sound and meaning is, like rime, an aid to the structural effect. In Tennyson's *In Memoriam* are many examples of this, the repetition binding together sometimes two rimed lines, and sometimes two unrimed. Here it binds together two stanzas:[3]

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, Thy foot
Is on the skull which Thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

Almost any page of Swinburne will show examples of iteration, for he is especially fond of all the more obvious effects of tone-color. His iteration is more usually for musical effect than for the rhetorical parallelism that aids the expression of meaning.

[3] This as well as the following examples from Swinburne are quoted in Professor C. Alphonso Smith's monograph, "Repetition and Parallelism in English Verse." 1894.

I have put my days and dreams out of mind
Days that are over, dreams that are done.
(*Triumph of Time.*)

Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower;
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day.
(*Before Dawn.*)

More often Swinburne prefers a chiastic arrangement in these repetitions:

Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;
But love grows bitter with reason, and laurel outlives not May.
(*Hymn to Proserpine.*)

Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.
(*A Forsaken Garden.*)

Sometimes a number of successive lines may have each an iterated word, *e. g.*

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside.
(*Triumph of Time.*)

A special effect may be produced by unifying a whole passage by the use of a frequently repeated sound. The infinite iteration of the waves is suggested in the first stanza of Rossetti's *Sea-Limits* by this means:

Consider the sea's listless chime;
Time's self it is made audible,—
The murmur of the earth's own shell,

Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

Poe's *Annabel Lee* uses the similar device of making half of the rime words identical through six stanzas, to express the eddying repetition of the thought. And the principle is further carried out by refrain lines and lines with repeated phrases.

Poe's use of repetition is distinctive, so distinctive, in fact, that an imitation of it suggests parody. In several of his best known poems he brings together in each stanza two lines identical but for one or two words. In *Ulalume* he has introduced such lines, both in succession and in alternation:

The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crisped and sere—
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid-region of Weir,
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

This kind of repetition occurs, though not to so great an extent, in *Eulalie*, *The Raven*, *The Bells*, and several other of Poe's pieces.

Poe's conscious artistry has had an influence on many subsequent poets, but in this trick of very obvious iteration he has had almost no followers in England and America. When tone-color is made so prominent an element in verse the reader feels more the artificiality of the technique than the emotion expressed in the poem.

The use of the ordinary type of *refrain line*, an identical, or almost identical, line recurring regularly in each stanza,

is one of the oldest and most frequent devices of our lyric poets. It has been used by all song writers from the author of the *Cuckoo Song*, our earliest lyric, to the latest music hall poetaster. It may be introduced into, or added to any stanza form the poet chooses. The refrain may be a line which fits naturally as a conclusion to the thought of each stanza, and so makes for a greater structural unity. George Wither's *Shall I wasting in despair?* is an illustration of how lyrical structure may be consolidated through the use of a refrain. It begins:

Shall I wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flow'ry mead in May,
If she think not well of me,
What care I how fair she be?

The succeeding stanzas carry out this idea of the poet's indifference to a woman's kindness, virtue and high birth, each ending with a fitting variation of the refrain couplet; and the last stanza, epitomizing the preceding four, concludes with,

For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?

Here the refrain fits on always in the same way, as an expected conclusion. Another way of using it is to make it fit on to stanzas that are not all alike in purport. Tennyson's *Lady of Shallot* has two refrain lines that occur with slight variations in stanzas that carry out the narrative thread of the poem.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the world and meet the sky;

And thro' the field the road runs by
To many tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go.
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shallot.

. . . . . .

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shallot.

Bringing in the refrain after lines of different purport is one of the essential structural characteristics of the Old French forms, the ballade, triolet, rondeau, etc., developed in our verse during the eighties and nineties.[4] In these forms the refrains are always identical lines, but in other verse types slight variations, like those in the examples just quoted, are sought for, rather than avoided.

Though refrains are chiefly used in the rimed verse forms, they have been employed occasionally in blank verse and in unrimed lyrics. Each blank verse paragraph of Tennyson's *Oenone* begins with,

O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die,

or sometimes with merely the second line or a variant of it. Several experiences of Percivale in Tennyson's *Holy Grail* end with the following lines, or some phrase very like them:

I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death.

[4] *See* Chapter XV.

Blank verse lyrics employ refrains as a means of setting off stanzas without the help of rime. For example, every third line of Charles Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces* is,

All, all are gone, the old familiar faces,

or some variant that ends with the last three words. These refrains in unrimed verse serve the same purpose as those in rimed stanzas—to bind together the poetic form by the repetition of both sound and meaning.

There is also a type of refrain in which the meaning is unimportant. In these we have an effect purely of tone-color. Such are the refrains of the once popular echo poems, and the refrains which consist in the iteration of a proper name, like *Edward! Edward!* or *Binnorie, O Binnorie!* in the ballads, or like *My Mary!* or *Dark Rosaleen!* or *Eileen Aroon!* in the songs by Cowper, James Mangan, and Gerald Griffin. Tennyson's *Ballad of Oriana* will serve as an illustration:

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow
And loud the norland whirlwinds blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

Similar to these are the nonsense refrains in old songs and ballads, like *"Sing lullaby, my little boy," "Heigh nonino!"* and *"Lillibulero O lillibulero!"* And the refrains in foreign languages are almost as purely effects of sound. It is the romantic strangeness of Ζώη μοῦ σας ἄγαπω and *"Hah! Hah! la belle jaune giroflée"* that attracts us. Rossetti and Morris took advantage of the possibilities of refrains, the sheer sound of which may give atmosphere to a poem, like the effect of a repeated phrase in a musical composition.

The constantly recurring refrains in the *Sailing of the Sword*, *Two Red Roses across the Moon*, *Eden Bower*, *Troy Town*, and *Sister Helen* have no logical connection with the poems, but contribute to the tragic mood; and the unusualness of this method gives a certain exotic flavor. Here are the first two stanzas of *Sister Helen*, but one can appreciate best the peculiar effect of this sort of repetition by reading the whole poem aloud.

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little Brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Three days to-day between Hell and Heaven!)[5]

"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might."
"Be very still in your play to-night,
Little Brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven!)

The use of whole stanzas as refrains in lyrics written to be sung is the commonest and most obvious means of impressing a mood through repetition. They are usually interpretative of the description or narrative, and enforce the sentiment by reiterated suggestion. Often they rely largely for their effect on sound. The refrain of *Auld Lang Syne*, for instance, consists practically of the words of the title repeated three times. In thousands of cheap popular songs the refrain is of more importance than the rest of the poem; the other stanzas are frankly an excuse for the iteration of the "chorus." Ballads and songs not written for musical accompaniment have phrases or single lines for refrains more often than whole

[5] The italics are the poet's.

stanzas. In Tennyson's *Mariana*, however, which aims at a monotony of mood, the quatrain of lament repeated after each eight line stanza of description completes the unified impression of despairing grief. A common use of long refrains in narrative and descriptive poems is to introduce them at the beginning and then reserve them for the conclusion. In this way the impression of the mood is emphasized without monotony, as in Kipling's *Ballad of East and West.* Alfred Noyes' *Haunted in Old Japan* uses an impressionistic refrain for the second, and again for the concluding stanza.

The use of imitative tone-color in words—what is called *onomatopœia*[6]—is an ornament occasionally added both to verse and prose. In the study of language the term is applied to the formation of words to imitate sounds,[7] but in poetic and prose style the term includes suggestive sounds and imitative or suggestive rhythms.

Some onomatopoetic words are self-explanatory imitations like, *moo, meow, whinney, cluck, coo, cockadoodledoo, ding-dong, zip, boom, bang;* and besides these there are a great number, of the imitative character of which we are not quite so conscious; as for instance, *murmur, thunder, groan, roar, moan, howl, cough, snore, snort, thump, squeak, squeal, gibberish, hubbub, sizzle, hoot, whack, sputter.* Then there is a class of words which are not imitative of sounds, but which, by their sound, contribute suggestion to their meaning; for example, *gallop, totter, toddle, wriggle, twinkle, stumble, harsh, huddle, hobble, clutter, flicker, helter-skelter, skedaddle.* Most words of this sort are not imitative in their origin, but the fact that we think there is some suggestion in their sound gives them a greater vividness in connotation. Onomatopoetic words of all kinds, in fact, are especially vivid and direct.

In phrases of verse or prose, imitative effects may be produced by supplementing an imitative word with words that will prolong its sound. In the phrase, "*loud resounding*

[6] ὄνομα + ποιεῖν.
[7] Also called *echoism.*

thunder rolled," the sound *und* in *thunder* is reinforced by the sounds *oud, ound,* and *old.* Similar reinforcements of one onomatopoetic word occur in the phrases, "*long drawn moan of pain,*" and "*stumbling drunkenly.*" In the following example from Tennyson's *Princess,* there are but two sounds directly imitative, *lisp* and *hiss,* but they are supported by related sounds which make us hear the effect as we read:

When a light wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerous leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear.
(Tennyson: *Princess.*)

Here are three lines from James Whitcomb Riley's *When the Frost is on the Pumpkin,* in which the same principle is used:

And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees.
The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn.
O, it sets my heart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock.

Imitative effects may also be produced without the aid of any single onomatopoetic word, as in,

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.
(Tennyson: *Princess.*)

and,

And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
(Milton: *Comus.*)

Or sometimes the purely imitative words are incidental and subordinate, as in Tennyson's description of lightning, which

. . . strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain.
(*Princess.*)

And in the same poem occurs,

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees.

Browning has a similar effect gained by similar means in,

> And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill,
>
> (*Up at a Villa.*)

where *whine* is the only onomatopoetic word. And there is but one imitative word, *rustling*, in Poe's line,

> And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain.
>
> (*Raven.*)

Very often the imitative suggestion comes purely from the rhythm of the line, or from a combination of rhythm with tone-color. Examples are,

> Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd with hammers.[8]
>
> (Tennyson: *Princess.*)

> Like a god's loosened locks slips undulously
>
> (Francis Thompson: *Dread of Height.*)

> With many a weary step and many a groan,
> Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone;
> The huge round stone resulting with a bound,
> Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground.
>
> (Pope: *Odyssey*, XI.)

Pope was especially clever at this trick of making imitative lines. In the illustration just quoted he has used the devices of repetition of words and sounds, alliteration, obstructing the rhythm by extra accents, and prolonging the last line into an alexandrine. The use of an alexandrine in heroic couplets was a favorite device in the seventeenth and eigh-

[8] The phrasing with so many trochaic words seems to me to add to the effect.

teenth centuries for producing suggestive effects. There are, for instance, Pope's wounded snake and Cowley's river:

> Till the whole stream that stopp'd him shall be gone,
> Which runs, and as it runs, for ever shall run on.

Dr. Johnson approved of this Cowleian line, but could not discover why a pine in another verse of Cowley's, "is taller in an alexandrine than in ten syllables." [9]

Interesting effects which we may call onomatopœia, though there is no direct imitation, appear in these two examples:

> Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait.
> (Milton: *Paradise Lost*, VII, 411.)

> the spires
> Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
> (Tennyson: *Holy Grail.*)

The unusual rhythm and the alliteration seem to produce part of the impression, but the striking choice of the words *enormous* and *incredible*, perhaps has as much to do with it.

Sidney Lanier, whose poetry is especially interesting to the student of tone-color, has attempted in his *Symphony* to suggest differences in the quality of orchestral instruments by the iteration of sounds that vaguely correspond to these different qualities. It is, of course, the imagery of the passages that helps us to feel a special appropriateness in the sounds. The hautboy and bassoon are the most successfully suggested:

> And then the hautboy played and smiled,
> And sang like any large-eyed child,
> Cool-hearted and all undefiled.
> . . . . . .
> Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling tunes
> The ancient wise bassoons,
> Like weird
> Gray-beard

[9] Like some fair pine o'er-looking all th' ignobler wood.
(*Davideis*, IV.)

Old harpers sitting on the high sea dunes,
Chanted runes.

The prevalence of the sound *nd* in Francis Mahony's *Bells of Shannon* is another attempt at an extended use of onomatopœia.

Few poets have cultivated the directly imitative sound effects to any great extent. Tennyson seems to have cared more for them than most of the major poets, but even he introduced them as a rare embellishment. They are so conspicuous a form of *preciosité* that they inevitably call attention to their own artifice.

The most famous examples of whole poems that are intended to rely for their effect more on tone-color than on thought or even imagery, are Southey's *How the Water Comes down the Cataract at Lodore* and Poe's *Bells*. Of these two extended *tours de force*, Poe's is much more subtle, but even it can hardly be valued as more than a display of skilful artistry.

Alliteration may be defined as the identity of one or more initial consonants in words not far apart, or in the accented syllables of such words, *e. g.*, "*l*ove's de*l*ight"; "*d*ear, *d*ead women"; "*b*lown *b*uds of *b*arren flowers"; "*d*eep *d*amnation";

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans.
(Tennyson: *Princess.*)

Alliteration, very obviously, is a matter of sounds, not of letters; therefore, the student of this effect of tone-color, as well as of all others, must not be confused by the vagaries of English spelling. For example, the initial sounds of "*c*at," "*qu*it," "*ch*oir," and "*k*ick" are alike, though the symbols for them are different; and so with "*sh*ore," "*s*ugar," "*ch*aise," and "*sch*ist." On the other hand, the initial consonants of "*ch*oir" and "*ch*aise" do not alliterate, though the symbols for them are alike. But the expression "*cheap chaise*" is

alliterative because the two sounds represented by *ch* here are so nearly alike that we feel one as almost a repetition of the other. Similarly, "*pl*ease," "*bl*ess," and "*l*ips" are in alliteration. The point of all this is, follow your ear rather than your eye in any question pertaining to the melody of verse.

Alliteration is an embellishment that has been common in our poetry, and in our language itself, from the earliest times. We see an innate popular fondness for it in colloquial and proverbial expressions like, "*A cat may look at a king*," "*Look before your leap*," "*last but not least*," "*thick and thin*," "*rough and ready*," "*first and foremost*," "*far and few*," "*time and tide*," "*forget and forgive*," "*kith and kin*." In this last case, because of our fondness for alliteration, we have an archaic word, *kith*, retained in use only in this expression. We find the same neatness of phrase in easily remembered alliterative titles like, *Love's Labour's Lost, Merry Wives of Windsor, A Death in the Desert.*

Our fondness for this sort of sound repetition has much to do with the popularity of certain quotations. For example, are not such often used lines as,

> In maiden meditation, fancy-free,
> (*Midsummer Night's Dream.*)

> The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve,
> (*Ibid.*)

and,

> But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
> (*Macbeth.*)

popular as much for the ear-catching quality of their alliteration as for the aptness of their meaning? This point may be more clearly brought out by citing Poe's

> To the glory that was Greece
> And the grandeur that was Rome,
> (*To Helen.*)

which, though it has been quoted a thousand times, seems to me to have no special felicity in choice of words other than that imparted by the initial *g's* and *r's*.

In Old English verse alliteration was an essential structural element. The stressed syllables of the important words were bound together by the repetition of initial sounds, as, for example,

Bord and brad swyrd brune helmas.

Structural alliteration had a revival in the fourteenth century,[10] but since then has been obsolete. Alliteration that is ornamental, however, has persisted in all English poetry down to the present day. Chaucer, who scoffed at the "rum, ram, ruff" verse,[11] still used frequent alliteration to embellish his lines, *e. g.*

Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
(*Canterbury Tales, Prologue.*)

Excessive alliteration, which was characteristic of popular Elizabethan verse, as it still is of childish tongue-twisting rimes and circus advertisements, was also ridiculed by Shakespeare.[12] But he used it himself, in moderation, as one of the melodious effects of his verse.

In general, the modern use of alliteration in verse is purely

[10] *See* example quoted from *Piers Plowman*, above, p. 32.
[11] *Canterbury Tales, Parson's Prologue.*
[12] Quince, the Prologue (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i), says,

"Whereat with blade with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast."

Holofernes (*Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, ii) says he "will something affect the letter for it argues facility." And Kent (*King Lear*, II, ii), when reproved for his bluntness, embellishes his speech with,

"the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front."

ornamental, an effect of tone-color. The use of it in these couplets of Pope, for instance, is to add a certain pleasing finish:

> Love in these labyrinths his slaves retains,
> And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
>
> While melting music steals upon the sky
> And soften'd sounds along the waters die.
> (*Rape of the Lock.*)

The prominence of this ornamental effect gives it something of an italicizing force to the alliterated expressions.

Alliteration, too, has never altogether lost its original structural purpose. It may have an effect of binding together phrases and lines. In the following lines of Pope, the antithesis in the words is emphasized by the iteration of their initial sounds:

> To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
>
> Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
> Mere curious pleasure or ingenious pain.
> (*Essay on Man.*)

And sometimes a whole passage may be linked together subtly by an interwoven alliteration that extends from line to line. This from *Macbeth* may illustrate:

> Besides, this Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
> The deep damnation of his taking off;
> And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim horsed
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind.

Each sound underscored in this passage occurs at least twice within hearing distance; initial *h* occurs oftenest, but chiefly on unstressed syllables; initial *b* occurs six times, and initial *d* four. Another case of the binding together of line groups by alliteration may be seen in some of the stanzas of Collins's unrimed *Ode to Evening*.[13]

In all the passages from which examples of alliteration have been cited so far, the repetition is not frequent enough to be an expected mannerism of style. That it frequently becomes so in Swinburne is one of the commonest criticisms charged against him. Some of his passages are alliterated so consistently on the tonic syllable—where it is always most conspicuous,—that the device becomes as prominent as it was in old English verse. For example:

> Low down where the thicket is thicker with thorns than with leaves in the summer.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Shrill shrieks in faces the blind bland air that was mute as a maiden,
> Stung into storm by the speed of our passage, and deaf when we past.
>
> (*Hesperia.*)

And again:

> From the lips everliving of laughter and love everlasting, that leave
> In the cleft of his heart who shall kiss them a snake to corrode it and cleave.
> So glimmers the flower into glory, the glory recoils into gloom.
>
> (*Garden of Cymodoce.*)

Such an excessive use seems to most ears a blemish. It can, however, be effective if, as in the following pair of lines, a sense of monotony is the aim:

[13] Professor Bronson's edition of Collins, p. lxix.

O wind, O wingless wind that walk'st the sea,
Weak wind, wing-broken, wearier wind than we.
(*On the Cliffs.*)

But even Swinburne recognizes a distinction in the consonants he chooses to alliterate. The gutturals, for instance, unless relieved by a liquid, as in the "gloom-into-glory" passage just quoted, are harsh and unpleasant; and *b* has a conspicuous explosiveness—witness the delightful absurdity of,

Made meek as a mother whose bosom beats
bound with the bliss-bringing bulk of a
balm-breathing baby,

in Swinburne's parody of himself in *Nyphalidia.* This same explosive effect of *b* is turned to advantage in the suggestive lines of Browning,

That bubble, they were bent on blowing big,
He had blown already till he burst his cheeks.

The sound *s* is another which cannot be excessively alliterated without an unpleasant effect.

Alliteration, as we have considered it so far, has been merely the repetition of the prominent consonants of verse passages. The effect is much more subtle and makes a finer ornament to verse when consonants in less conspicuous places are also repeated. This effect, as well as alliteration proper, is included in what we may call *consonantal sequence,*[14] the iteration, change, and blending of the successive consonant sounds of a passage.

The consideration of consonant sequence is concerned with what sounds go well together and what do not, and what effects certain sequences may give. The principle underlying it is the same as that under all other effects of tone-

[14] Sometimes called *Syzygy.*

color—that the repetition of like sounds, or the blending of closely related sounds, whether of lines, phrases, words, consonants, or vowels, is, with some reservations, a pleasing embellishment in verse. The reason may be that repetition in some form makes a passage or an expression easier to pronounce, easier to remember, and more emphatic.

Lines which seem to have more of the elusive "magic" of sound which charms the reader, are patterned in a subtle and sometimes elaborately wrought web of repetitions. Here are three lines from Francis Thompson s *Sister Songs* patterned with alliteration, both initial and internal, of the three closely related liquids *m, n, ng:*

Memnonian lips!
Smitten with singing from thy mother's east,
And murmurous with music not their own.

Lanier's line,

A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly,

seems to have a sound suggestive of the meaning, partly through the smoothness of the repeated l's, and perhaps partly through the epithet *velvet* and the weak ending of the line. A repetition of *l* also characterizes these lines from Poe's *Sleeper:*

The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;

Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
Irene, with her Destinies!

The musical smoothness fitting to the theme comes from

the extreme use of l's supported by other liquids *r*, *m*, *n*. The first line,

The rosemary nods upon the grave,

is a blending of *r*, *m*, *n*, with the addition of a repeated *z*.

A very pleasing effect through consonant repetition is heard in the phrase *"immortal amarant"* where three consonants in one fine sounding word are echoed in the following word. The same principle of tone-color gives character to Coleridge's

A damsel with a dulcimer,
(*Kublah Khan.*)

and Milton's

With heaven's artillery fraught comes rattling on
Over the Caspian
(*Paradise Lost*, II.)

The mere roughness or smoothness of a verse depends chiefly upon whether it contains harsh combinations of consonants difficult to pronounce. The stops, *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, *g*, *k*, naturally do not blend as easily in successions of speech sounds as do the liquids or the continuants. Words in which many consonants are grouped with but few vowels are difficult to pronounce smoothly. Such words as the following, with five or six consonants to a single vowel, are obstructions in a line of verse: *stretched*, *screeched*, *scratched*, *strengths*, *staunched*, *squelched*. On the other hand, vocalic words are easy to pronounce and therefore euphonious. They seem to have a beauty apart from their meaning. The following words, which I think most readers will agree have a pleasing sound, are made up almost wholly of vowels and liquids (which are almost the same as vowels) and contain no stopped sounds: *harmony*, *harmonious*, *angel*, *orison*, *immemorial*, *Ulalume*, *Lenore*, *ethereal*, *vermillion*, *oriflamme*. Such words make for smoothness and beauty in verse. Of

course these perfectly vocalic words are unusual; one could not compose verses exclusively of them. But a comparison of the two lists I have just given will show what to seek and what to avoid, where a facile flow of rhythm is the end desired. More particularly, the careful distribution of the stopped consonants, rather than the avoidance of them, is what the versifier should aim at.

The most conspicuous of all English sounds is the sibilant. Its prominence may become almost comic in the drawled hymn-singing of a congregation, and its persistence even in low toned speech is indicated in the onomatopoetic word *whisper*. The word "sibilant" applies to any of the hissing sounds, *s*, *z*, *sh*, *ch* (*tsh*), and *j*. An excessive alliteration of any one of these or of several combined, has generally been avoided by the poets. Tennyson declared he "never put two s's together in any verse." Avoiding the sibilants he called "kicking the geese out of the boat."[15] And Shelley in his first draft of the *Ode to the West Wind* wrote,

> Lulled by the silence of his crystal streams,

but later changed this to,

> Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams.[16]

Shakespeare, on the other hand, does not seem to fear the sibilants. A famous sonnet begins,

> When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past,

and in *Midsummer Night's Dream* we have,

> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
> To hear the sea-maid's music.

[15] *Memoir* by his son, ii: 14.

[16] Shelley, following Milton, adheres in this line to the classical accent crystálline (Gk. κρυστάλλινος).

And Milton seemed positively fond of sibilant combinations, as, for example:

> Through the soft silence of the listening night.
> (*Circumcision.*)
> So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
> And seat of Salmanasser whose success.
> (*Paradise Lost.*)

If a lesser poet than Milton had written these last two lines, I fear it would go hard with him. And Macbeth's,

> if the assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
> With his surcease, success,

is particularly reprehensible to me because the *preciosité* of the expression shows that the sibilants here are intentional, not careless slips.

But Shakespeare and Milton are exceptions among our verse technicians in their use of sibilants; most careful poets avoid these sounds as much as possible. This is particularly true of song writers, for in singing, hissing sounds are unpleasantly prominent. One writer, John Thelwell, went so far as to compose a *Song without a Sibilant.*

As all consonants are more conspicuous in emphasized syllables, lines phrased with extra accents are especially likely to introduce roughness and difficulty. Browning's incredible line,

> Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt
> the maw-crammed beast.[17]
> (*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*)

illustrates this point. The extra accented words *Irks* and *Frets*, and the heavy syllables *-full* and *-crammed* bring

[17] *Cf.* the smoothness of the passage in the Authorized Version which probably suggested the line: "Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?" (Job, VI: 5.)

together most conspicuously such awkward combinations as *ksk* and *mdb*. Here are two examples of the same principle in Lowell:

Fresh blood in Time's shrunk veins make mirth

and,

laughing hunts the loath drudge round.

The obstruction to the rhythm in these lines is quite inappropriate to the thought.

Poe, whose complete mastery of such details made him a merciless critic of technique, annihilated one Algernon Henry Perkins for writing the line,

Its clustered stars beneath Spring's footsteps meets,

"in which the consonants are more sadly clustered than the stars. The poet who would bring uninterruptedly together such letters as *th*, *s*, *p*, and *r*, has either no ear at all, or two unusually long ones. The word 'footsteps,' moreover, should never be used in verse. To read the line quoted, one must mouth like Forrest and hiss like a serpent."[18]

Triple rhythm feels even more than duple, the hindrance of awkward consonant combinations in heavy or extra accented syllables. In the following three lines the rapid anapestic movement is suddenly checked by the sheer difficulty of pronouncing first, the sequence, *kskoldsp*, and then, the uncouth word *stretched*, which occurs in a place where a light syllable is expected.

The stars on their way from Atlantic's cold spray
O'er the proud Appalachian's crest
Stretched long fingers of light through the dusk of the night.

Naturally, this sense of difficulty which is imparted by irregularities in rhythm and by cluttering consonants may be

[18] Poe's *Works*, "Virginia Ed.," XI, 115.

exactly the thing desired in a verse to produce a suggestive effect. The two lines,

Along the narrow valley rough and high,

and,

Straight through the deep precipitate rock gorge,

have about the same meaning; but the former with its even rhythm and its freedom from stopped consonants is pitifully weak compared with the latter, which is made up of rhythmic and consonantal obstructions. The difficult consonants, without the help of rhythmic change, produce the effect in

Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke.
(Gray: *Elegy.*)

And the reader must plow painfully through many hard consonantal sequences in the three following onomatopoetic lines, though there are but two interfering extra accents:[19]

O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
(*Paradise Lost,* II.)

Browning has given a huddled and cluttered effect to his anapestic movement in the suggestive line,

At the foot of your rotten-planked rat-riddled stairs.
(*Master Huges of Saxe-Gotha.*)

And there is an appropriate tightness about the expressions *strict calyx* and *music's bud* in Lanier's

In o'er-strict calyx lingering,
Lay music's bud too long unblown.
(*Beethoven.*)

[19] *Rough* and *hands.*

The clash of unusual consonant repetition is brought out by the inverted word order in these two lines of Pope:

> Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
> Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive,
>
> (*Rape of the Lock*, I.)

while the line (from the same poem, Part V),

> Fans clap, silks rustle and tough whalebones crack,

uses merely extra accents to produce the same effect.

Sometimes these extra accents and cluttering consonants may be employed for a sudden comic turn in light verse by tripping the reader in a rapid passage, *e. g.*

> When papers speak with puff and praise
> Of kings, quack medicine, railroads, plays
>
> (T. Robertson: *Song* in *Society*.)

> I'll never throw dust in a juryman's eyes,
> (Said I to myself—said I,)
> Or hoodwink a judge who is not over-wise,
> (Said I to myself—said I,)
> Or assume that the witnesses summoned in force
> In Exchequer, Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, or Divorce,
> Have perjured themselves as a matter of course,
> (Said I to myself—said I!)
>
> (W. S. Gilbert: *Iolanthe*.)

Perhaps the most familiar examples of this sort of thing are to be found in Kipling, when he ruthlessly rides through uncouth words and heathen names, for example:

> You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din.
> You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din.
>
> (*Gunga Din*.)

or,

> While the Big Drum says,
> With 'is "rowdy-dowdy-dow!"—
> "Kiko kissywarshti don't you hamsher argy jow?"
>
> (*Rout Marchin'*).

Vowel sequence concerns the effects of repetition, change, or grouping in the successive prominent vowel sounds of a passage. To be accurate in his recognition of likenesses and differences in vowel sounds the student would find some reading in elementary phonetics useful.[20] The poet and the student of poetry must cultivate an "ear mind" rather than an "eye mind." The caution given in the discussion of the consonants must be repeated here with regard to the vowels: English spelling bears but a vague and illogical relation to English pronunciation. For example, the symbol *a* is used for nine different sounds: *father, fat, fate, fare, fall, want, any, villa, village;* there are twenty-one symbols for the vowel which occurs in *fate* and almost as many for that in *pool;* and the vowel sound represented by the symbol *i*, as in *fine*, is in reality a diphthong (*a*+*i*) and is variously represented in the spelling of *height*, a*i*sle, ey*e*, d*ie*, b*y*. The reader who uses his eye more than his ear in reading verse will see the same vowel symbol occurring ten times in the line,

Whilst birds, in wild swift vigils circling skim,

but the reader who follows readily by ear, can distinguish four different vowel sounds in it.

The principle upon which the effects of vowel sequences depend is that of the other sources of melody in verse—that a moderate degree of repetition of sounds is agreeable, but an excess of it is unpleasant. The repetition may be of the same vowel, or of the same vowel and consonant together (*i. e.*, internal rime), or it may be a sequence of related vowels (*e. g.*, all long or all short). Here are some lines from Keats which seem to me to gain distinction through some kind of vowel iteration:

With many more the brawniest in assault.
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight.

[20] For example, Soames and Vietor: *Introduction to English, German, and French Phonetics.*

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings.
Could glimmer on their tears; when their own groans.
For Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison.

(*Hyperion.*)

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down[21] she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands together prest.

(*Eve of St. Agnes.*)

In most cases of a successful use of this device the iterated vowels occur on stressed syllables, although in the second and third examples just quoted they do not. The effect becomes monotonous and unpleasant when three iterated vowels follow in immediately successive syllables, as in the hideous example below, which Lanier[22] gives to illustrate this point:

'Tis May-day gay: wide-smiling skies shine bright,
Through whose true blue cuckoos do woo anew
The tender spring.

Such effects as this everyone will agree are bad, but a critic must beware of arbitrary generalizations in the field of tone-color. The reader's ear must determine the merits of each case. The point of taste is most difficult to decide where there is a close repetition of both vowel and consonant. For example, is Byron's

Friendship shifts with the sun-beam,

(*Fill the Goblet Again.*)

[21] The diphthong in *down* is really $a + u$, and therefore blends with the long *u*'s of the rest of the passage.

[22] *Op. cit.*, p. 302.

to be regarded as an ornament or a blemish? Milton scoffed at his opponent, Bishop Hall, for writing,

Teach each hollow grove to sound his love,

but he himself later wrote,

Manliest, resolutest, breast,[23]
As the magnetick hardest iron draws.

The repetitions in Rossetti's

It was Duke Luke did this,
(*Staff and Scrip.*)

and Francis Thompson's,

Of twilight, violet-cassocked acolyte,
(*Orient Ode.*)

displease my ear, yet both cases are evidently studied effects by poets with a subtle ear for melody. On the other hand, the echo of the sound *or* through Tennyson's line,

Laborious orient ivory, sphere in sphere,
(*Princess.*)

seems to me to add a *preciosité* which successfully hints the intricacy of the carving described. And Kipling's line,

On thin, tin, crackling roofs,
(*Native Born.*)

I should call another good use of repeated sound, because it adds suggestion to the line. But who shall decide such questions which must depend upon individual taste?

There have been attempts to attribute special appropriateness to the different vowel sounds when one of them is made to predominate in a passage. Such theories may sound

[23] Lowell: *Essay on Milton.*

convincing when illustrated by single examples, but search for further cases, or a little ingenuity in composition may easily disprove these theories. For instance, one might formulate an ingenious hypothesis of the melodic effect of iterating the sound of the long close *o*, as illustrated in any *one* of the following passages, but is it possible to formulate a theory of sound and thought correspondence that will hold for *all* of them?

Marvel of marvels, if I myself shall behold
With mine own eyes my King in His city of gold;
Where the least of lambs is spotless white in the fold,
Where the least and last of saints in spotless white is stoled,
. . . . . .
Cold it is, my beloved, since your funeral bell was toll'd:
Cold it is, O my King, how cold alone on the wold!
(Christina Rossetti: *Marvel of Marvels.*)

Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled;
Heavy to get, and light to hold;
Hoarded, bartered, bought and sold,
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled:
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old
To the very verge of the church-yard mould;
Price of many a crime untold.
(Hood: *Miss Kilmansegg.*)

These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.
(Poe: *Ulalume.*)

Their orbs are troublously
Over-gloomed and over-glowed with hope and fear of things to be.
(Francis Thompson: *Mistress of Vision.*)

I cannot find sufficient evidence for attaching any special mood to any single vowel effect. The only principle that seems justified by the practice of English poets is the very obvious and general one that a preponderance of long vowels seems to make a passage move slower, and therefore adds suggestive sound to ideas implying length, space, distance, time, languor, weariness, dignity, or solemnity; and that the short vowels, which seem to give rapidity of movement, add expressiveness to ideas implying lightness, speed, delicacy, frivolity, etc. The first stanza of Gray's *Elegy* has four-fifths of its stressed vowels long, and the whole poem includes many sequences like,

> Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,

or,

> Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.

Bryant's *Thanatopsis* gains much of its solemn dignity through a prevalence of long vowels—especially, in one part, through long o's and u's which have a great sonorousness when followed by a liquid, as in *old, tomb, rolls, Oregon, along,* etc. Here are some further illustrations of single lines the import of which is enhanced by the hinted onomatopœia which the prevalence of long vowels may add:

> A land where all things always seem'd the same.
> . . . Our island home
> Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.
> (Tennyson: *Lotus-Eaters.*)

> The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
> Moans round with many voices.
> (Tennyson: *Ulysses.*)

> Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground
> (*Romeo and Juliet,* V, iii.)

Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold.
(*Paradise Lost*, IV, 238.)

The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky,
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
(Pope: *Rape of the Lock*, 3.)

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
(Byron: *Childe Harold*, IV.)

Blake's *Cradle Song* is an exquisitely musical lullaby built chiefly on the repetition of two long vowel sounds. In the first stanza, the vowel in *sweet* predominates, in the third, the diphthong in *smiles*, and the other six stanzas echo these two sounds:

Sweet dreams, form a shade[24]
O'er my lovely infant's head!
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams!

Sweet smiles in the night
Hover over my delight
Sweet smiles, mother's smile,
All the livelong night beguile.

The rapidity of movement which stressed short vowels contribute may be illustrated by lines from Milton and Tennyson. In these examples they reinforce the choppiness which is characteristic of the trochaic movement or of a phrasing with trochaic words:

Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks, and wreathed Smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek
. . . . . .

[24] The slow rhythm of four monosyllabic feet in each stanza contributes largely to the mood of the poem.

Come and trip it as ye go
On the light fantastic toe.

. . . . . .

And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew.

. . . . . .

Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow.[25]

(*L'Allegro.*)

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go
But I go on forever.

(Tennyson: *The Brook.*)

The examples quoted so far through this chapter were selected because some single melodic effect was emphasized in each. To appreciate how tone-color may enrich poetry, the student should try to analyze a number of great passages, to determine how much of their greatness is attributable to the intrinsic thought, how much to the imaginative quality of words, and how much to each effect of tone-color employed.

[25] Contrast in the parallel poem these four dignified lines with long vowels:

All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.

The work of Keats would make an admirable subject for such a study, because most of the effects classified in the above pages may be found in Keats, and furthermore, he was a conscious artist who had theories of his own on tone-color.[26] Let us examine the purely melodic qualities of a passage from the *Eve of St. Agnes:*

> A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
> All garlanded with carven imageries
> Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
> And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
> Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
> As are the tiger-moth's deep damask'd wings;
> And in the midst 'mong thousand heraldries,
> And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
> A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Since the stanza occurs in the middle of the poem the Spenserian rime scheme is so clearly in the reader's ear that he recognizes *was: grass,* and *imageries: device: dyes: heraldries* as imperfect, hinted rimes, agreeable variations from the exact. The melodic repetition of rimes within the line is heard in *arch'd, garlanded, carven,* the vowel of which is close to those in the end rime *was: grass.* Another internal rime sequence occurs in *panes, quaint, stains.* The distinct alliterations are *f*ruits, *f*lowers; *m*oths, *m*idst,'*m*ong; *sh*ielded, *scutch*eon; *blush'*d, *bl*ood; and the repetition of *d,* both initial and internal, through six lines,—chiefly heard in *d*iamon*d*ed, *d*evice, splen*d*id, *d*yes, *d*eep, *d*amask'*d*, mi*d*st, thousan*d*, heral*d*ries. Vowel repetitions are heard in d*i*amonded, dev*i*ce, d*y*es, t*i*ger; w*i*ngs, *i*n, m*i*dst; sa*i*nts,

[26] "Mr. Bailey has informed me that one of Keats's favorite topics of conversation was the principle of melody in verse, which he believed to consist in the adroit management of open and close vowels. He had a theory that vowels could be as skilfully combined and interchanged as differing notes of music and that all sense of monotony was to be avoided except when expressive of a special purpose."

(Lord Houghton's *Life of Keats.*)

emb*l*a*z*onings; and sc*u*tcheon, bl*u*sh'd, bl*oo*d. The richness of the melody comes from an interlinking and blending of all these effects; no single one contributes largely by itself. For example, the fine alexandrine,

A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings,

includes three alliterations (*sh*, *b*, and *k*), and two vowel repetitions (*ie* and *u*); and a pair of lines in the middle of the stanza is made up chiefly of the same prominent sounds combined in different sequences:

And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes.

All these blendings of consonants and echoes of vowels and rimes supply the melody which accompanies the glowing imaginative picture evoked by the words, just as a "tone-poem" in music enriches and develops the emotion produced in us by the story upon which it is based.

In the discussion of all these elements of tone-color—rime, assonance, alliteration, consonant and vowel sequence—I have repeatedly questioned whether there is any inherent quality in any individual speech sound which can be associated with a specific mood, or emotion, or idea. It is true that emotional associations may be evoked by the tone qualities of musical instruments; we speak of a "yearning" violin, a "homesick" flute, a "plaintive" or a "solemn" bell, and an "arrogant" automobile horn. (Fancy an "amorous" trombone, or a "passionate" bass-drum!) And we speak of colors in similar terms, *e. g.*, "irritating" red, "soothing" green, "sensuous" purple, "innocent" light blue, "simpering" pink. Through the associations of our race experience and our individual experience both colors and sounds may have emotional effects. It is in recognition of this common property of colors and sounds that we use the term "tone-color." Some people with a subtle feeling

for sound quality associate colors with the timbre of musical instruments—scarlet for the trumpet, green for the reed instruments (doubtless from the pastoral association), blue for the flute—but there is no general agreement in these correspondences, and attempts to carry them far seem supersubtle and fantastic.

Correspondences even so general as these cannot rationally be claimed for the speech sounds, because they have not the continuity of effect which colors or musical sounds have. There is in poetry a succession of at least two or three different vowels and consonants every second; no single one is present long enough to create a mood. And further, the elements of the meaning and connotation of words add a complexity which makes the psychological effect of tone-color in verse so subtle as to defy analysis. The attempts of psychologists have so far been completely futile,[27] and the correspondences which the French symbolists have imagined seem to most people sheer absurdity.[28] The only sound conclusions in the matter are of the most general sort.

[27] Dr. R. C. Gilver ("Psychological Effect of the Elements of Speech in Relation to Poetry." Unpublished Harvard dissertation, 1914) has tabulated the results of several years' investigation of the motor, visual, and auditory effects of the different sound qualities on a number of readers. He attempted to record the effect on these subjects of reading such combinations of sounds as this, for example, which he finds typical of Keats:

Ni rul su veed ri nest it al ith reen.

The results of this long and patient study are, as Dr. Gilver admits, few, if any—except that the "laws of introspective consciousness are by no means sun clear!"

[28] Arthur Rimbeau, for example, has a famous sonnet in which he attributes a color to each of the vowels. René Ghil (*Le Traité du Verb*, Paris, 1886) has a very obscure statement of the principles of the symbolists. An abstract of his color system is given in *American Journal of Psychology*, 5:504:

"F, l, and s correspond to the long primitive flutes.

L, r, s, z correspond to the horn, bassoon, hautboy:

O, o, io, oi give the reds—Ou, ou, iou, oui, go from the black to the russet,

Sequences of vowels and consonants which are easy to produce please the ear; those which are difficult do not. Tone-color may effectively heighten style by a choice of either vocalic or rough sequences, whichever may be appropriate to the thought. Repetitions of a sound (rime, assonance, alliteration) are agreeable unless they occur too often or too close together. Repetition tends to make more prominent the words linked together by it, and makes more vivid our realization of their meaning or their imaginative power. This same enhancing vividness in words may occasionally be produced by imitative sound effects (onomatopœia).

In every consideration of poetic tone-color one must not forget that the meaning and the connotation of the words is fundamental; their sound only contributory. Might not one who did not know the meaning of the words *iron-ware*, *hemorrhage*, or *pneumonia*, think—judging them purely from their sound—that they would make fine words for a lyric? I have heard of a negress—evidently with a fine ear for tone-color—who called her child *Malaria*, because she thought it a beautiful name! And why are not *chloral*, *cantharides*, and *calomel* quite as melodious as *floral*, *Hesperides* and *Philomel*? The meaning is of primary importance even with words which we think imitative or suggestive. For example, there are two very different meanings to each of the following words: *knoll*, *tattoo*, *loom*, *lumber*, *hack*, but it is only when they are used in one of their senses that we recognize their sound as suggestive.

Sometimes the unusualness of a word may make us feel that its mere sound is significant, though, in reality it may not be, *e. g.*, *cymar*, *spilth*, *escalade*. Or strangeness of spelling may deceive us in the same way, *e. g.*, *myrrh* (*cf.* the more commonplace *bur*, *fur*). Again, certain of the less

---

The a, o, and iu are to be used to express magnitude, fullness and amplitude. E and i for the tiny, the sharp, the sorrowful and mourning. O, r, s, and x for the great passion, for impetuosity, roughness, etc."

usual polysyllabic words may seem to have an importance and dignity of sound, *e. g.*, *multitudinous*, *incarnadine*, *labyrinthine*, *tabernacle*, *ambrosial*, *amarant*, *impurpurate*, *roseal*, *dulcitude*. How much of the effectiveness of such words is due to sound and how much to connotation is impossible to determine.

The use of proper names in poetry presents similar questions of the relation of sound and association. The Miltonic use is probably the most notable. Consider this passage:

> And all who since, baptized or infidel,
> Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
> Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
> Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
> When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
> By Fontarabbia.
>
> (*Paradise Lost*, I.)

Part of the fine effect of the passage comes from the romantic halo around the well-known names and the kindling of vague imaginings by those that are strange. But inextricably blended with these connotations are the sheer sound effects of consonant sequences and vowel echoes. Observe the melodic repetitions of *m*, *mont*, *as*, and *co* in the sequence of names, *Aspra*mont, *Mont*alban, D*amasco*, *M*arocco, Trebis*on*d, F*ont*arabbia, and also the alliterations in Tre*bis*ond, *Bis*erta, *s*ent; *sh*ore, *Ch*arlemain; *f*ell, *F*ontarabbia.

For names with which we have no associations, like Poe's inventions, *Weir* and *Ulalume*, we imagine a connotation from their sound and their verse context. The "misty mid-region of *Weir*" suggests the word *weird*, and the "vault of thy lost *Ulalume*" vaguely suggests the word *gloom*.[29] But if this last mentioned name occurred in the context, "Mid valleys of blossoms roamed fair *Ulalume*," might it not just as well borrow some of the connotation of *bloom*? Blake's names, *Har*, *Thel*, and *Luwah*, have an oriental strangeness

[29] Poe probably coined it from *ululate*.

of sound which fits the vague mystic poems in which they occur.

Since the sheer sound of words or proper names cannot produce an effect which will overcome the meaning or the imaginative association, the poet must beware of allowing his fondness for beautiful sounds to be his chief guide. The sacrifice of sense for melody leads to affectation and pinchbeck ornament. The poet who inclines to the principle, "Give heed to the sound and the sense will take care of itself," should study the joyous *reductio ad absurdum* of his theory—Edward Lear's *Jumblies:*

> And all night long they sail'd away;
> And when the sun went down,
> They whistled and warbled a moony song
> To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
> In the shade of the mountains brown,
> "O Timbaloo! how happy we are
> When we live in a sieve and a crockery jar!
> And all night long, in the moonlight pale,
> We sail away with a pea-green sail
> In the shade of the mountains brown."[30]

Great poems never depend upon sheer melody, but great poets often choose an epithet or even a line with melody as a primary motive. Tennyson's

> Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
>
> (*Oenone.*)

was first written,

> Idalian Aphrodite ocean-born,

a change to a weaker adjective purely for the melody. The choice of the unusual epithet in the line from *Enoch Arden,*

> The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again,

[30] The vowel and consonant sequences and echoes are as finely blended and distributed as those of Keats!

was evidently for onomatopœia.[31] Melody carried so far we may admire, but the extravagance of Swinburne's

So glowed their aweless amorous plenilune,

in the description of Iseult's eyes—is hard to accept. A sheer love of melody may lead even so great an artist as Keats into an occasional ambiguity of meaning. Critics have been troubled over his description of Madelein asleep,

> Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
> Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
> Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
> As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.
> (*Eve of St. Agnes.*)

Wasn't the poet perhaps thinking less of the puzzling connection between missals and Paynims, than the echo of sounds in *Bliss*fully, *miss*al, and *pain*, clas*p*'d, *Payn*ims, *pray*, *rain?* Keats more usually combines clarity of meaning, aptness of figure, and richness of melody without a sacrifice of one at the expense of the others. And this should always be the ideal aim of the poet.

Melody in poetry is neither an end in itself nor a meaningless embellishment, but an important aid to intensify the æsthetic emotion evoked by the rhythm and the ideas, images, and suggestions of the words.

---

[31] Wordsworth has an interesting remark, in the preface to his edition of 1815, on the word *broods*, in the line,

Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods*.

"The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation."

PART II

TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL VERSE FORMS

CHAPTER IX

Stanza Forms

Verse, like prose, has a paragraph structure. In the continuous forms like couplets or blank verse, there is no way of making this stand out. Verse written in stanzas, however, can show this paragraph structure. A stanza is any definite arrangement of a limited number of lines usually bound together by a rime scheme. Ordinarily, verse arranged in stanzas is so phrased that there is some sort of grammatical pause at the end of each line so that the line unit may be clear to the listener. As the rime, however, may be relied upon to define the line-structure, such phrasing is not at all a necessity. Some poets, in fact, with the simpler stanza forms, try particularly to make the sense run beyond the line. But it is seldom we find that the sense period does not coincide with the stanza, *i. e.*, the stanza usually embodies a complete sentence or paragraph.

Ideally, one may say that the successive stanzas of a short poem should have a cumulative effect, with the climax in the last stanza. A fine example is George Herbert's *Virtue:*

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
    The bridal of the earth and sky—
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
    For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
    Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
    And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
    A box where sweets compacted lie,

My music shows ye have your closes
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal
Then chiefly lives.

Such perfection of form is unusual, and, of course, with many themes this cumulative effect would be out of place, but wherever possible, the poet should strive for it.

Stanzas are practically always built on a framework of rime pattern. There are very few successful poems in English in unrimed stanzaic form. Tennyson's *Tears, Idle Tears* has been quoted before[1] as an example. Notice that in this poem the sense does not run over the line, as in the best blank verse, and that the end of the fifth line of each of the four stanzas is the refrain, "The days that are no more." This grammatical pause at the end of the line and the use of the refrain are also characteristic of Longfellow's *Bells of Lynn* and Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces.* Blake's *To Spring* has neither of these aids to keep the stanza form clear:

O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell one another, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turn'd
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth
And let thy holy feet visit our clime!

The poem from which this is quoted is really sixteen lines of blank verse phrased in four-line paragraphs. The stanzas are purely a matter of printing. The ear likewise would find the unrimed stanza form of Collins's greatly admired *Ode to Evening*, or, Keble's *Burial of the Dead*, difficult to grasp.

[1] *See above*, p. 82.

Southey's three hundred page poem, *Thalaba, the Destroyer,* is a most ambitious attempt at unrimed stanzas. The opening of it is typical:

How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, no speech, nor stain
Breaks the serene of heaven:
In full-orbed glory yonder morn divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girded with the sky.
How beautiful is night!

The poet here has tried to keep the lines distinct by the phrasing, but the stanza is purely arranged for the eye, not the ear, for the length of the stanzas and length and arrangement of the lines composing them are constantly changing throughout the poem. The result, in spite of the elaborate indentations of the printer, is free verse like Matthew Arnold's. It should be added that it is excellent verse, but without the stanzaic organization that the poet probably wished.

The important thing in writing unrimed stanzas, beside keeping the line and stanza pattern regular and distinct, is not leading the reader to expect a rime which does not come. The jolt with which one arrives at the end of the fourth line of Southey's early experiment, the *Spanish Armada,* is most painful:

Clear shone the moon, the gale was fair,
When from Corunna's crowded port,
With many a cheerful shout and loud acclaim,
The huge Armada, passed.

The annoyance is caused by the ballad swing that starts the recognized stanza form and makes us expect the rime that is always associated with it.

All these stanzas without rime are comparatively rare in English verse, and, like the imitations of classical rhythms, must be regarded chiefly as experiments. Stanzas are practically always rimed.

The form of a stanza is a fixed, but purely arbitrary matter, quite at the option of the poet. Almost every combination of length of line and variety of rime-scheme seems to have been tried in the course of English poetry. Certain forms, however, have been given preference over others by the poets; and some stanzas by association with great masterpieces, have come to have a fitness for certain kinds of subject matter. Fashion is as arbitrary in poetic forms as everywhere else, and breaches of it, however rational, are likely to be met with disapproval. The ballad stanza suggests simple narrative; the heroic quatrain a reflective mood; the sonnet, "a moment's monument." There is no reason for these correspondences of form and subject except that the usage of poets has made us expect them. Mr. John Masefield's brutally realistic narratives written in "rime royal"—the stanza form associated with the Scottish James I. and Chaucerian romance—are like an over-dressed kitchen maid,

> For different styles with different subjects sort,
> As several garbs with country, town, and court.

There are not many poetic forms so consistently devoted to one type of thought that one may venture to be dogmatic about them. In general, the simpler stanzas are best for simple narrations or simple ideas, and the more intricate forms had better be reserved for elaborate story-telling, or for subtler or more complex poetic thought. In the following pages, the forms in most frequent use are exemplified; the list, by no means pretends to be exhaustive.

Two line stanzas are used in a very few poems:

> Up and away through the drifting rain!
> Let us ride to the little tower again,

Up and away from the council board!
Do on the hauberk, gird on the sword.

The king is blind with gnashing his teeth!
Change gilded scabbard to leather sheath.
(Wm. Morris: *Little Tower.*)

Rossetti's *White Ship* and Kipling's *Bo Da Thone* are other ballads in this form. There is no difference, except in the printing, between this and the continuous couplet.[2] Tennyson's *Higher Pantheism* is written in two line stanzas of trochaic-dactylic hexameters, and his *Locksley Hall* in two line stanzas of trochaic octameter lines. In the usual iambic movement these long lines rimed in pairs would be exactly the same as quatrains of short lines.[3]

Tercets, three line stanzas riming *a a a*, were in considerable favor in the seventeenth century. They were used with great charm by Fletcher, Herrick, and Rochester. The following, in trochaic movement, are supposed to be by Shakespeare:

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed in cinders lie.

. . . . . .

Truth may seem, but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair;
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.
(*Threnos* in *Phœnix and the Turtle.*)

In the nineteenth century, Lamb wrote his *In My Own Album* in tercets, and Tennyson used them for his *Two*

[2] *See* Chapter X.

[3] For a discussion of *Locksley Hall see* Chapter XVI.

Voices and the fragment, the *Eagle*:

> He clasps the crag with hooked hands;
> Close to the sun in lonely lands,
> Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
>
> The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
> He watches from his mountain walls,
> And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Other examples in tetrameter are Landor's *Children Playing in a Churchyard* and Longfellow's *Maidenhood.*

Kipling's *Mulholland's Contract* is an example in lines of seven feet, occasionally varied by lines of six:

> I had been singin' to them to keep 'em quiet there,
> For the lower deck is the dangerousest, requirin' constant care,
> An' give to me, as the strongest man, though used to drink and swear.

The form has also been used with a dactylic movement:

> Maiden most beautiful, mother most wonderful, lady of lands,
> Queen and republican, crowned of the centuries whose years are thy sands,
> See for thy sake what we bring to thee, here in our hands.
> (Swinburne: *Song of the Standard.*)

Terza rima is a continuous form composed of pentameter tercets, each linked to the preceding tercet by the rime scheme (*aba, bcb, cdc, ded,* . . . etc.). The final stanza of the poem is a quatrain, linked to the preceding tercet by the rime scheme (. . . *ded, efe, fgfg*). Terza rima is the form of Dante's *Divina Commedia;* it has not been used to any great extent in English. It was introduced by Wyatt and used in one or two poems by Sidney, Daniel, Drummond, and Milton. In the nineteenth century it was used by Byron

for his *Prophecy of Dante* and by William Morris for his *Guinevere.* Alfred Noyes' *Progress of Love* also is in this form. Terza rima is employed for long poems—usually narratives—of a serious tone.

To handle terza rima well requires skill in phrasing. The sense should run over the line a great deal, and the full stops should rarely occur at the end of the first line of a group, for this phrasing gives the impression of a quatrain. The following example of terza rima, is from Byron's *Prophecy of Dante:*

Many are poets who have never penned
    Their inspiration, and perchance the best;
    They felt, and loved, and died, but would not lend
Their thoughts to meaner beings; they compressed
    The God within them, and rejoined the stars,
    Unlaurelled upon earth, but far more blessed
Than those who are degraded by the jars
    Of Passion, and their frailties linked to fame,
    Conquerors of high renoun, but full of scars.

Shelley invented a modification of terza rima for his *Ode to the West Wind.* This poem is grouped in four parts, each composed of four tercets of terza rima concluded by a couplet.

The *quatrain* is in most frequent use of any stanza form. It may be composed of lines in any meter, and of many combinations of meters. It may be rimed *abab, xaya, abba, aabb, aaba.* The following pages give examples of many of its possible types.

A few random examples in the shorter meters are:

Throw away thy rod
  Throw away thy wrath;
O my God,
  Take the gentle path.
(George Herbert: *Discipline.*)

Welcome, maids of honor,
You do bring
In the spring
And wait upon her.
(Herrick: *To Violets.*)

The Day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm;
The Night in her silence,
The Stars in their calm.
(Arnold: *Song of Callicles.*)

Love laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rose bed;
And his eyes with tears are red,
And pale his lips as the dead.
(Swinburne: *Love Laid His Sleepless Head.*)

I dare not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile,
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.
(Herrick: *To Electra.*)

The *short meter* of the *Church Hymnal* is the two line "poulter's measure," an example of which was quoted on page 31, broken up into four lines. The first, second, and fourth are trimeter, and the third is tetrameter. They are rimed *xaya*, or *abab*:

The King Himself comes near
And feasts his saints to-day;
Here may we seek and see Him here,
And love, and praise and pray.
(Isaac Watts.)

Tennyson has used this stanza with trochaic lines:

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.
(Tennyson: *Flower.*)

Trimeter combined with a third line of pentameter also occurs:

Sunset and evening star,
  And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
  When I put out to sea.
(Tennyson: *Crossing the Bar.*)

The most frequently used of all quatrains is the *common meter* of the *Hymnal.* This is tetrameter alternating with trimeter:

O Lord, be with us when we sail
  Upon the lonely deep,
Our guard when on the silent deck
  The nightly watch we keep.
(E. A. Dayman.)

This form, that has its origin among the people, has been used for countless hymns, ballads, and simple songs. Two other examples of it may be quoted:

There lived a wife at Usher's well,
  And a wealthy wife was she;
And had three stout and stalwart sons,
  And sent them o'er the sea.
(*Wife of Usher's Well.*)

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
  Old time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles to-day
  To-morrow will be dying.
(Herrick: *To the Virgins.*)

The *long meter* of the *Hymnal,* four tetrameter lines rimed *xaya,* or *abab,* has also been much used for simple themes:

Annan water's wading deep,
And my love Annie's wondrous bonny;

And I am laith she suld weet her feet,
Because I love her best of ony.
(*Annan Water.*)

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.
(Tennyson: *Sailor Boy.*)

It has been used with a trochaic rhythm occasionally in the *Hymnal:*

Hymns of praise then let us sing
Unto Christ, our heavenly King,
Who endured the cross and grave,
Sinners to redeem and save.
(From Latin.)

When the tetrameter quatrain is rimed *abba* it is known as the In Memoriam stanza, from Tennyson's use of it in his great elegy, *e. g.*

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing when we cannot prove.
(Tennyson: *In Memoriam.*)

It had been used before by Ben Jonson, in an elegy, and by Rossetti in *My Sister's Sleep*, but the fame of Tennyson's poem has caused the form to be associated with his name. Professor Corson's[4] comment admirably describes the stanza: "By the rime-scheme of the quatrain, the terminal rime-emphasis of the stanza is reduced, the second and third verses being the most closely braced by the rime. The stanza is thus admirably adapted to that sweet continuity of flow, free from abrupt checks, demanded by the spiritual-

[4] *A Primer of English Verse*, pp. 70 ff.

ized sorrow which it bears along. Alternate rime would have wrought an entire change in the tone of the poem. To be assured of this one should read, aloud, of course, all the stanzas whose first and second, or third and fourth, verses admit of being transposed without affecting the sense. By such transposition, the rimes are made alternate, and the concluding rimes more emphatic." Two stanzas which admit of this change are,

> Old yew, which graspest at the stones
> That name the underlying dead,
> Thy fibers net the dreamless head,
> Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.
>
> (II, 1.)

> I hold it true, whate'er befall;
> I feel it when I sorrow most,
> 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
> Than never to have loved at all.
>
> (XXVII, 4.)

As illustrations of the adaptability of the stanza, because of the reduction of terminal emphasis, to an uninterrupted flow of thought and feeling, Professor Corson quotes sections XII and LXXXVI.

Other ways of riming the tetrameter quatrain are *aaxa*:

> O love, what hours were thine and mine,
> In lands of palm and southern pine;
> In lands of palm, of orange blossom,
> Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine,
>
> (Tennyson: *Daisy.*)

and *aabb:*

> If Rosamond that was so fair,
> Had cause her sorrows to declare,
> Then let Jane Shore with sorrow sing,
> That was beloved of a king.
>
> (*Ballad of Jane Shore.*)

This form has not much individuality, for it gives the effect of couplets. The impression of quatrains can only be given by making the phrasing bring out the four line unit.

Tetrameter Quatrains in rhythms other than iambic are:

Iambic-Anapestic, aabb:

Bishop Bruno awoke in the dead midnight,
And he heard his heart beat loud with affright;
He dreamt he had rung the palace bell,
And the sound that it gave was his passing knell.
(Southey: *Bishop Bruno.*)

Iambic-Anapestic aaaa:

In the hour of death after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.
(*Dominus Illuminatio Mea* in *Oxford Book of Verse.*)

Dactylic, aabb:

Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's, in your path;
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!
(Byron: *Song of Saul.*)

Tetrameters may be combined with dimeters and trimeters into quatrains thus:

O what can ail thee, knight at arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.
(Keats: *La Belle Dame Sans Merci.*)

The forward youth that would appear
Must now forsake his Muses dear,
Nor in the shadow sing
His numbers languishing.
(A. Marvell: *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell.*)

The *heroic quatrain,* an invention of the seventeenth century, is made up of four pentameters rimed *abab.* The sonorous and stately effect of this stanza is associated with Gray's famous *Elegy:*

> The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
> And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
> Await alike the inevitable hour;
> The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

The form has been found suitable only for serious and reflective poems. Because of the dignity of the stanza, rarely are the first and third lines unrimed, and feminine rimes are seldom introduced.

Pentameter quatrains are not often rimed *aabb,* or *abba.* Examples, however, can be found:

> Fresh from the dewy hill, the merry year
> Smiles on my head and mounts his flaming car;
> Round my young brows the laurel wreathes a shade,
> And rising glories beam around my head.
>
> (Blake: *Song.*)

> Faces of men that once, though long ago,
> Saw the faint light of hope, though far away—
> Hope that, at end of some tremendous day,
> They yet might reach some life where tears could flow.
>
> (Alfred Noyes: *An East-end Coffee Stall.*)

The first of these is evidently not popular because, like the tetrameter quatrain rimed similarly, it cannot be distinguished from couplets. As the latter scheme, which, by the way, is identical with the opening of a sonnet, has not been employed for any great poem, it lacks the sanction of best usage.

The only other way of riming the pentameter quatrain that has been used is the scheme *aaxa,* of the "Omar stanza":

> And those who husbanded the Golden grain
> And those who flung it to the winds like Rain

Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.
(Fitzgerald: *Rubaiyat.*)

This singularly effective form has not been used for any other masterpiece, except Swinburne's *Laus Veneris:*

Asleep or waking is it? for her neck,
Kissed over close, wears yet a purple speck
Wherein the pained blood falters and goes out;
Soft, and stung softly—fairer for a fleck.

Forms like the "Omar stanza" and the "In Memoriam stanza," that are definitely associated with one great poem, can hardly be used yet without the suggestion of imitation. Forms that are old enough to be common property are much safer for the young poet.

An interesting, but rare, pentameter quatrain is one in anapestic rhythm, rimed *abab.* This has a rather fine sweep and dignity:

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,
There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill and the fold,
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,
And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.
(A. E. Housman: *Shropshire Lad,* XXIII.)

Pentameter lines are not effectively used in combination with tetrameter in quatrains, but pentameters and trimeters are often combined:

We should steal in once more,
Under the cloudy lilac at the gate,
Up the walled garden, then with hearts elate,
Forget the stars and close the cottage door.
(Alfred Noyes: *Earth-Bound.*)

His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine;
For these dost thou repine?

He may have left the lonely walks of men;
Left them he has, what then?
(Landor: *To the Sister of Elia.*)

Quatrains are also used in the longer meters, hexameter and heptameter. The following are examples:

Hexameter, iambic-anapestic, aabb:

When earth's last picture is painted, and the tubes are twisted and dried,
When the oldest colors have faded, and the youngest critic has died
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it—lie down for an æon or two,
Till the Master of all Good Workmen shall set us to work anew!
(Kipling: *L'Envoi* to *Seven Seas.*)

Heptameter, iambic, aabb:

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself is past.
(Byron: *Stanzas for Music.*)

The Liner she's a lady, an' she never looks nor 'eeds—
The Man o' War's 'er 'usband, an' 'e gives 'er all she needs;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats, that sail the wet seas roun',
They're just the same as you an' me a-plyin' up an' down!
(Kipling: *Liner She's a Lady.*)

Heptameter, trochaic, aabb:

All along the purple creek, lit with silver foam,
Silent, silent voices, cry no more of home!
Soft beyond the cherry-trees, o'er the dim lagoon,
Dawns the crimson lantern of the large low moon.
(Alfred Noyes: *Haunted in Old Japan.*)

When quatrains are written in meters longer than pentameter, they have usually been rimed *aabb*, as in the last three specimens, so that the end of each line may be dis-

tinctly felt. Since Swinburne and Kipling, however, have accustomed our ears to these longer meters, we can feel lines of six or seven feet as metrical units. Alfred Noyes, taking this for granted, has a fondness for quatrains of hexameters rimed alternately (*abab*). He has written one example of octameters (in trochaic-anapestic movement) rimed in this way:

Down to the valley she came, for far and far below in the dreaming meadows
Pleaded over the voice of voices, calling his love by her golden name;
So she arose from her home in the hills, and down through the blossoms that danced with their shadows,
Out of the blue of the dreaming distance, down to the heart of her lover she came.

(*Orpheus and Eurydice.*)

Five and six line stanzas are merely developments of some of the different sorts of quatrains just illustrated. They may be formed in any way the poet pleases, so long as they are in accordance with what was said in Chapter VII about the arrangements of rimes. These stanzas are much less common than quatrains, and no one particular type has come into popularity. A few examples of the five line stanza (quintain) follow:

aabba:

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

(Herrick: *Night-Piece.*)

ababb:

Go lovely Rose—
Tell her that wastes her time and me,

That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.
(Waller: *Go Lovely Rose.*)

ababb:

The Queen sat idly by her loom,
She heard the arras stir,
And looked up sadly: through the room
The sweetness sickened her
Of musk and myrrh.
(Rossetti: *Staff and Scrip.*)

abaab:

At the chill high tide of the night,
At the turn of the fluctuant hours,
When the waters of time are at height,
In a vision arose on my sight
The kingdoms of earth and the powers.
(Swinburne: *Tenebrae.*)

aabbb:

Mary mine that art Mary's Rose,
Come in to me from the garden-close.
The sun sinks fast with the rising dew,
And we marked not how the faint moon grew;
But the hidden stars are calling you.
(Rossetti: *Rose Mary.*)

The six line stanza (sexain) is more frequently used than the five line. The following are a few of the forms which it may take:

ababcc:

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires:

As old time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.
(Carew: *Unfading Beauty.*)

abbaab:

What thing unto mine ear
Wouldst thou convey—what secret thing,
O wandering water ever whispering?
Surely thy speech shall be of her.
Thou water, O thou whispering wanderer,
What message dost thou bring?
(Rossetti: *Stream's Secret.*)

abbacc:

Of Florence and of Beatrice
Servant and singer from of old,
O'er Dante's heart in youth had toll'd
The knell that gave his lady peace;
And now in manhood flew the dart
Wherewith his City pierced his heart.
(Rossetti: *Dante at Verona.*)

xayaza:

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.
(Rossetti: *Blessed Damozel.*)

abcbac:

Sing to me! Ah remember how
Poor Heine here in Paris leant
Watching me play at the fall of day
And following where the music went,
Till that old cloud upon his brow
Was almost smoothed away.
(A. Noyes: *Death of Chopin.*)

abcabc:

Fasten your hair with a golden pin,
And bind up every wandering tress;
I bade my heart build those poor rhymes:
It worked at them, day out, day in,
Building a sorrowful loveliness
Out of the battles of old times.
(W. B. Yeats: *He Gives His Beloved Certain Rhymes.*)

aabccb:

No time casts down, no time upraises,
Such loves, such memories, and such praises,
As need no grace of sun or shower
No saving screen of post or thunder,
To tend and house around and under
The imperishable and peerless flower.
(Swinburne: *Age and Song.*)

The only seven line stanza that has an acknowledged position in English verse is the *rime royal.* This seems to have been first used by Chaucer in his *Complaint to Piety.* It receives its name from the old French term *chant-royal,*[5] applied to a type of poems with similar stanzas. It was used by King James I. of Scotland, in his charming old romantic story, the *King's Quair,* by other poets of the fifteenth century, and by Shakespeare in his *Lucrece.* It is composed of iambic pentameter lines rimed *ababbcc.* This scheme gives the very pleasing variation of alternate rimes blending into couplets. The association of the form with Middle English romance has given it the individuality that attaches to aristocratic lineage. William Morris is the only modern poet to revive the form. Examples are:

To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
Gan for to lyke hir mening and hir chere,
Which somedel deynous was, for she leet fale

[5] *See below,* p. 255.

Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
Ascaunces, "what! may I not stonden here?"
And after that her loking gan she lighte,
That never thought him seen so good a sighte.
(Chaucer: *Troilus*, I, 1, 42.)

In a far country that I cannot name;
And on a year long ages past away,
A king there dwelt in rest and ease and fame,
And richer than the Emperor is to-day:
The very thought of what this man might say,
From dusk to dawn kept many a lord awake,
For fear of him did many a great man quake.
(Wm. Morris: *Proud King.*)

Other seven line forms that have been used are *ababcca*:

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, may'st see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.
(Browning: *Guardian Angel.*)

and *ababccb*:

Weary of erring in this desert life,
Weary of hoping hopes forever vain,
Weary of struggling in all sterile strife,
Weary of thought which maketh nothing plain,
I close my eyes and calm my panting breath,
And pray to Thee, O ever quiet Death!
To come and soothe away my bitter pain!
(J. Thomson, "B. V.": *To Our Ladies of Death.*)

Stanzas of eight lines may be composed by doubling any form of quatrain, or by freely combining two different quatrains, with or without using tail-rime. The commonest

examples are those in the *Hymnal*, composed by doubling short, long, or common meter.

The best known form of eight line stanza, *ottava rima*, was borrowed from Italy by Wyatt and Surrey. The Elizabethans used it for long narrative and reflective pieces. It was revived in the nineteenth century by Byron, Keats, and others. It consists of iambic pentameter rimed *abababcc*:

> O Love! O Glory! what are you who fly
> Around us ever, rarely to alight?
> There's not a meteor in the polar sky
> Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
> Chill, and chained to cold earth, we left on high
> Our eyes in search of either lovely light:
> A thousand and a thousand colors they
> Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.
>
> (Byron: *Don Juan*, VII, 1.)

The only recognized stanza form remaining to be considered is the *Spenserian*. This stanza, invented by Spenser for his *Faery Queene*, is composed of nine iambic lines, eight pentameters concluded by an alexandrine (hexameter), and rimed *ababbcbcc*:[6]

> A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
> Ycladde in mightie armes and silver shielde,
> Wherein old dents of deepe wounds did remaine,
> The cruell markes of many a bloudie fielde;
> Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
> His angry steede did chide his foaming bitt,
> As much disdayning to the curb to yield:
> Full jolly knight he seemd and faire did sitt,
> As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.
>
> (I, 1, 1.)

This highly wrought stanza lends itself to the expression

[6] For an interesting study of the Spenserian stanza, *see* H. Corson: *op. cit.*, pp. 87-133.

of elaborate decorative art. Simple themes or realistic narratives are out of place in it. As each stanza is adaptable to a separate picture, the form is particularly fitted to leisurely, romantic, ornate story-telling. A good way to manage it is to use the couplet in the middle as a position of emphasis in the development of the stanza thought, which should sweep to a full close in the stately alexandrine at the end.

Since Spenser's time the stanza has been in favor with many poets, both major and minor. Modified forms of it were used by several early seventeenth century poets, and in the eighteenth century its extensive revival marked one of the earlier stages of the romantic movement. In the nineteenth century it was used with superb effect by Shelley, Keats, and Byron. The following illustrations show different themes for which it has been used:

A shrilling trompet sounded from on hye,
And unto battail bad themselves addresse:
Their shining shieldes about their wrestes they tye,
And burning blades about their heads do blesse,
The instruments of wrath and heavinesse:
With greedy force each other doth assayle,
And strike so fiercely, that they do impresse
Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle;
The yron walles to ward their blowes are weak and fraile.
(*Faery Queene*, I, 5, 6.)

Now strike your sails ye jolly Mariners,
For we be come unto a quiet rode,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this wearie vessell of her lode.
Here she awhile may make her safe abode,
Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
And wants supplide. And then againe abroad
On the long voyage whereto she is bent:
Well may she speede and fairly finish her intent.
(*Ibid*, I. 12. 42.)

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, where many a subject land
Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles.
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

(Byron: *Childe Harold*, IV.)

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak,
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

(Shelley: *Adonais.*)[7]

[7]For stanzas of more than nine lines used in the Middle English period, *see* R. M. Alden: *op. cit.*, and Schipper: *Englische Metrik.*

CHAPTER X

Tetrameter Couplet

The tetrameter couplet, although the oldest of the verse forms still in use, has not been such a favorite with modern poets as blank verse, or the heroic couplet. It has, however, a most respectable lineage, and in the hands of masters of versifying has shown itself capable of much interesting variety. It occurs extensively in middle English poetry, notably in the narrative work of Gower, and to some extent in Chaucer. It was the vehicle for many of the miracle plays, the moralities, and parts of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*. The Elizabethans found it much less interesting than other narrative forms. In the seventeenth century it was used in short pieces by Jonson, Milton, Andrew Marvell, and others; and Butler, by employing it for his *Hudibras*, made it very popular for satire. He was followed by Swift and Prior in the next century, and later Parnell used it for reflective verse. In the romantic revival it was again extensively employed in narrative—by Burns and Wordsworth in a few pieces, by Coleridge in his *Christabel*, but particularly by Scott and Byron in their verse tales. Later, William Morris used the form for parts of his *Earthly Paradise*.

Each of the poets mentioned have used this couplet with a certain individuality. In spite of this, however, it is not capable of so wide variation as the heroic form. The changing characteristics of the pentameter couplet have been due chiefly to the manner of phrasing popular at different periods; but with the tetrameter couplet, variation has been, more than anything else, a matter of rhythm.

The rhythmical pattern of the tetrameter couplets written by Gower, Chaucer, and nearly all the poets of the last

three centuries, has been very strictly duple. The convention as to the number of syllables to a line has been carefully observed so that such tetrameters are called *octosyllabic couplets*. The couplets of older English verse were quite irregular in rhythmical pattern, admitting feet of one, two, three or even four syllables. This, from its apparently haphazard effect, has been called *tumbling verse*, its only restriction being four approximately equal time parts to each line.

Tumbling verse was brought to its greatest perfection by Spenser's experiments with it in the sections of his *Shepherd's Calendar* for February, May, and September. Here is a passage that introduces most of the types of lines that Spenser admits in this meter.[1]

Sorrow ne neede be hastened on,
For he will come, without calling, anone;
While times enduren of tranquillitie,
Usen we freely one felicitie;
For when approchen the stormie stowres,
We mought with our shoulders bear off the sharp showers;
And, sooth to sayne, nought seemeth sike strife,
That shepheards so witen eche others life,
And layen her faults the worlde beforne,
The while their foes done eache of hem scorne.
Let none mislike of that may not be mended;
So conteck soone by concord mought be ended.

(*Shepherd's Calendar—May.*)

Just how this may be best read is questionable, but nearly everyone familiar with the poem will agree that the lines were probably all intended for tetrameters. Lines 3, 4, 11, and 12 can easily be read as pentameters, but certainly fit the context better if divided into four feet thus:

[1] There has been much question as to what Spenser was aiming at here. I suggest as an explanation that he was imitating the experimenter Skelton, many of whose attempts are in a cruder form of this tumbling rhythm.

While | times en- | duren of tran- | quilli- | tie,
Let | none mis- | like of that may | not be | mended.

or, perhaps,

Let | none mis- | like of that | may not be | mended.

Couplets of such irregular rhythm and with such ambiguous lines as those just quoted, have not been tried—with the exception of William Morris's experiment[2]—since Spenser's day. The octosyllabic couplet, however, has been much used, and has gone through almost as many changes as the pentameter couplets, though the differences in type are subtler.

One of the finest examples in English is Milton's use. Let us analyze a passage.

Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cyprus lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hear the muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing.

In the first place, there is a constant change in the flow of the iambic movement by repeated variation at the beginning

[2] *The Folk-Mote by the River* in *Poems by the Way*, 1896.

of lines (where variation is always most conspicuous). Less than half of the lines begin with the ideal iambic movement[3] of an unstressed syllable preceding a stress. Four of the lines (1, 11, 16, 18) are so phrased as to begin with an extra accent, *e. g.*

Côme, | pensive | Nun, de- | vout and | pure;

and one line (13) begins with two unstressed syllables followed by a monosyllabic foot, *e. g.*

With a | sad | leaden | downward | cast.

These two variations seem to hold up the movement momentarily. Two other types of beginning have the effect of hurrying it. Two lines begin with a trisyllabic foot:

| All in a | robe of | darkest | grain,

and

| Over thy | decent | shoulders | drawn;

and three lines (2, 4, 7) have a straight trochaic movement:

| Sober, | steadfast, | and de- | mure,
| Flowing | with ma- | jestic | train,

and | Come; but | keep thy | wonted | state.

The proportion of trochaic lines is very much greater in *L'Allegro*, where, of course, a more rapid movement is in keeping with the lighter mood. In that poem, both of the last mentioned beginnings occur with fine effect in the couplet,

While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin.

[3] This analysis, of course, is merely *my* reading of the passage. Any reader may disagree with me in details, but I think he will admit the general principle of the change in flow of the movement, and also that it is brought about by such variations as I suggest, though he may find them in other places.

Variation at the end of the line is much rarer in all kinds of verse than at the beginning. The only case of it in the passage from *Il Penseroso* is the light endings in the couplet,

> And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
> Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet.

The only other type of variation at the end of the line occurring in these two companion poems is the employment of a trisyllabic second foot with a monosyllabic third, *e. g.*

> And | singing, | startle the | dull | night,

and,

> And | to the | stack or the | barn- | door.

Andrew Marvel's exquisite couplet,

> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade,
>
> (*Garden.*)

may be quoted in this connection.

Further analysis of Milton's octosyllabics should deal with the conflicts of his phrasing with the metrical and rhythmical pattern of the form. Notice the shifting of the cesuras in the first four lines. If one read following the punctuation, there would be two, in different positions, in each of the first two lines; then, perhaps, one after *robe* in the third; and none in the fourth. The meaning is usually complete in each couplet, though not in each line. In lines 11 to 15, the meaning runs through two couplets, with an interesting reversal of the position of the pauses in lines 11 and 12. The conflict of the phrasing with the rhythm brings about less than one light stress to every two lines, and a moderate number of extra accents, as in,

> Thy | rapt sôul | sitting | ìn thine | eyes.

We may take a totally different type of verse, written

in the same century, to show by extreme contrast, of what variety the octosyllabic is capable. The couplets of Butler's *Hudibras* are so distinctive that they, and the verses written in imitation of them, have gone by the name of Hudibrastic. This use of tetrameter not only forms a distinctive type, but, in Butler's hands, it is capable of great variety within the type. There is amusing description, brilliant flash of epigram, rollicking narration, vulgarity, and at times, picturesqueness—all done with fitting rhythmical effect. To attempt to quote is difficult, but here are a few lines chosen more or less at random:

He knows the seat of Paradise,
Could tell in what degree it lies,
And, as he was dispos'd, could prove it
Below the moon, or else above it;
What Adam dreamt of, when his bride
Came from her closet in his side;
Whether the Devil tempted her
By a High Dutch interpreter;
If either of them had a navel;
Who first made music malleable;
Whether the Serpent at the Fall,
Had cloven feet, or none at all:
All this without a gloss or comment,
He would unriddle in a moment,
In proper terms such as men smatter
When they throw out and miss the matter.
. . . . . .
Beside he was a shrewd philosopher,
And had read ev'ry text and gloss over.
. . . . . .
That with more care keep holy day
The wrong, than others the right way.

(Part I, Canto 1.)

Gave way to fortune and with haste
Fac'd the proud foe, and fled and fac'd,

Retiring still until he found
He had got the advantage of the ground.
. . . . . .
That he resolv'd, rather than yield,
To die with honor in the field,
And sell his hide and carcase at
A price as high and desperate
As e'er he could. This resolution
He forthwith put in execution.

(Part I, Canto 3.)

If we compare these couplets with Milton's, we find about twice the proportion of light stresses. This gives a free and easy impression, like a bubbling over of witty conversation, careless and unpremeditated. The large number of feminine rimes and the surprise at the ingenuity of many of them bring a jocose turn at the end of each couplet. The meaning is rarely complete within the line, but each couplet either completes the sense, or is a clause added loosely to the preceding couplet. The enjambed phrasing of the last four lines quoted is not usual with Butler.

The passages from Milton and Butler just analyzed, exemplify the two general types of tetrameter couplets used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though, of course, each poet who used the form—Shakespeare (Prologues in *Pericles*), Swift, Prior, Gay, Collins, etc.,—individualized it with his own phrasing. A distinct change came with Coleridge's *Christabel*.[4]

Christabel is written on a basis of equality of time parts, in spite of the theory and the conventions of the eighteenth century as regards uniformity of rhythmical pattern. In his preface Coleridge says: "The meter of *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle, namely, that of counting, in each line, the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents

[4] Part I written 1797, Part II 1800, both published 1816.

will be found to be only four. Nevertheless, this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion."

Here is the much discussed opening of the poem:

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu-whit! . . . Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew!

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour,
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the spring comes slowly up this way

In this poem Coleridge has attained the perfection in a free tetrameter which Spenser did not reach in his experiments. In the tetrameters of the *Shepherd's Calendar* the rhythm is only occasionally duple, usually duple-triple, and often huddled by four syllable feet. *Christabel* is chiefly in duple rhythm, varied by duple-triple, or triple occasionally, and never admits feet of more than three syllables. The changes in the flow of the movement, spoken of in connection with

Milton's use, is much more varied than Milton's, but rarely abrupt as Spenser's. Coleridge uses all the changes in the beginning of lines pointed out in the passage from Milton, uses them more frequently throughout the poem, and supplements their effect by this change in rhythm for whole lines and passages. Probably the wide range in the rhythm of *Christabel* would not have pleased Milton's ear, but we may appreciate and imitate both as exquisite examples of two different types of couplets.

The third line of *Christabel*,

Tu-whit! . . . Tu-whoo!

is perhaps best read as a tetrameter with two feet occupied by intervals of silence. Lines 5 and 14 may be read as trimeters, or as tetrameters with the last foot occupied by an interval of silence:

How | drowsi- | ly it | crew! | |
| Is the night | chilly and | dark? | |

Such musical equivalence had been used by the Elizabethans,[5] but had not been in favor for nearly two centuries. Coleridge admits trochaic lines frequently and an occasional triplet, as at the end of the specimen quoted. He has also introduced two or three quatrains, several lines of dimeter, and once, a longer stanza rimed *abcacbcbb*.

Unusual couplets worth noting are,

A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly.

. . . . . .

It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My | mother | made it of | wild | flowers.

. . . . . .

She was most beautiful to see,
Like a | lady | of a | far coun- | tree.

[5] *See above*, p. 15.

Finally, the repetitions of words and rimes, and the varying tone-color are other extremely interesting embellishments.

Under the influence of *Christabel*,[6] Scott varied the couplets of his long narratives, using the form with a stirring music of his own. Byron in his own way followed Scott's use of tetrameter. In the hands of these two skilful metrists the couplet bid fair to be again as popular as it was in the fourteenth century. This passage shows what Scott could make of it:

> If thou wouldest view fair Melrose aright,
> Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
> For the gay beams of lightsome day,
> Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
> When the broken arches are black in the night,
> And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
> When the cold light's uncertain shower
> Streams on the ruined central tower;
> When buttress and buttress, alternately,
> Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
> When silver edges the imagery,
> And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
> When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
> And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
> Then go—but go alone the while—
> Then view St. David's ruined pile;
> And, home returning, soothly swear,
> Was never scene so sad and fair.
>
> (*Lay of the Last Minstrel*, II, 1.)

There may be some danger of the student considering the two long passages quoted from Coleridge and Scott perfectly typical. They are intended to illustrate the most varied parts of poems of several hundred lines, most of which are in strict duple rhythm. Besides introducing duple-triple rhythm, Scott prevents monotony by frequently falling into stanza

[6] Scott published his narratives before Coleridge's poem appeared, but he had heard parts of it read in manuscript.

forms. He uses quatrains, five and six line stanzas, and, in *Marmion*, long stanzas with repeated rimes that give a cumulative effect to melodramatic scenes.

One other means of gaining variety in the couplet, that has not appeared in any of the poets discussed, occurs in Keats's fragment, the *Eve of St. Mark:*

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old minster square;
From her fire-side she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leaved, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So sheltered by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she tried, and then again,
Until the dusk had left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.

This trick of dividing the couplet by making a full stop or an important pause necessary after the first line of it (5-6, 9-10, 11-12), Keats learned from Chaucer, who was evidently his model in this early piece.

Another poet who learned this—as well as other delightful things—from Chaucer, is William Morris. His handling of the strict octosyllabic couplet in many of his stories in the *Earthly Paradise* is one of the most pleasing and varied in the history of the form. Here are two specimens:

Grew Accontius wan
As the sea-cliffs, for the old man
Now pointed to the gate, where through
The company of maidens drew
Toward where they stood; Accontius
With trembling lips, and piteous
Drawn brow, turned toward them, and afar

Beheld her like the morning-star
Amid the weary stars of night.
Midmost the band went his delight,
Clad in a gown of blue, whereon
Were wrought fresh flowers, as newly won
From the May fields; with one hand she
Touched a fair fellow lovingly,
The other, hung adown, did hold
An ivory harp well strung with gold;
Gladly she went, nor seemed as though
One troublous thought her heart did know.
(*Accontius and Cydippe.*)

Sharper things grew beneath the light,
As with a false dawn; thin and bright
The horned poppies' blossoms shone
Upon a shingle bank, thrust on
By the high tide to choke the grass;
At night it the sea-holly was,
Whose cold gray leaves and stiff stark shade
On earth a double moonlight made.
(*Ring Given to Venus.*)

To the slightly archaic flavor of the occasional Chaucerian touches in the language of the first selection, Morris has added many of the skilful variations pointed out in other uses of this couplet. The conflict of the accents of the meaning with the stresses of the meter is nowhere better handled, producing such lines as,

Whose cold gray leaves and stiff stark shade,

and

A rose wreath round a pearl-wrought crown.
(*Watching of the Falcon.*)

Where they are in place, lines with a suggestively imitative rhythm occur:

Swift from her shoulders her long hair,
(*Ibid.*)

and,

> and thence undid
> The jewelled collar, that straight slid
> Down her smooth bosom to the board.
> (*Writing on the Image.*)

And then, Morris's phrasing has very great freedom. The eighteen lines of the passage from *Accontius and Cydippe* have but two sentences, the end of one and the beginning of the next dividing a couplet; the ends of grammatical clauses rarely come at the ends of lines. The slightly imperfect rimes, *wan: man; whereon: won; shone: on; grass: was*, are perhaps intended archaisms.

The student may feel that all the possible variations in the tetrameter couplet have been already made use of; that there is no room for further development. But doubtless, each generation in the past felt this. Some new narrative poet may appear, who will show us that there are still new possibilities in the oldest of our English meters.

CHAPTER XI

Pentameter Line—Heroic Couplet

For over five centuries of English literary verse the pentameter line in iambic movement has been most employed of all verse patterns. It is the basis for the heroic couplet, blank verse, the heroic quatrain, rime royal, ottava rima, terza rima, the Spenserian stanza, the sonnet, many types of the ode, and various unnamed stanza forms. Though the line occurs sporadically, and probably by accident, in some early examples of tetrameter "tumbling verse,"[1] its first unmistakable use as a norm is Chaucer's in his poems in rime royal and in his early ballades. As pentameter had long been in use in Old French poetry, Chaucer probably borrowed the meter, as well as some of the manner and substance, of the continental poets who furnished his first inspiration.[2] And since the time when Chaucer invented, or discovered, the use of the line in riming couplets, it has been the greatest of English meters.

There are several reasons for the overwhelming preference shown by poets and readers for this meter. The native English meter, tetrameter, by the irregular character of its rhythm, allowed much more variety in one respect than the iambic pentameter, but the unvaried symmetrical division of every line into two parts by the cesura made it extremely monotonous in another respect. The octosyllabic couplet, which was the fashionable form just before Chaucer's

[1] *See* Chapter X, p. 163.

[2] F. B. Gummere ("Beowulf and English Verse," *American Journal Philology*. 1st ser., vol. 7) presents the theory that the pentameter line may have developed from an attempt to give an iambic movement to Middle English tumbling verse.

introduction of the iambic pentameter, was, even in Chaucer's own handling of it, in danger of the same objectionable monotony as the older tumbling verse, and held its own with difficulty against the more varied foreign innovation. The feet of the pentameter naturally break into groups of two plus three, or three plus two; but the tetrameter, even when the place of the cesura is varied by the punctuation or phrasing, is *felt* as two dimeters. This division may be purely subjective, but some effort seems to be required to hear or feel tetrameter lines not symmetrically divided. Another reason for our preference for the pentameter may be the greater opportunity for avoiding monotony by shifting the position of the light stresses from line to line. Pentameter can often bear one light stress in every line of a passage, but tetrameter is weakened by such a large proportion; the result is that perhaps half the lines in octosyllabic verse have their four full stresses.

Hexameter and octameter verses, like tetrameter, divide symmetrically in half, unless an effort of attention makes the reader or listener feel them in some other way. Heptameter very easily breaks up into the "common" or ballad meter, an alternation of tetrameter and trimeter. In fact, heptameter, octameter, and nonameter lines are too long to be heard by the ear as single rhythmic groups, for the psychology of rhythm shows that five or possibly six units in a group are the limit that we can perceive without regularly breaking them into smaller groups. In order to feel the lines in the long meters of Swinburne as distinct units, the ear must be assisted by the eye.

The pentameter line, then, seems to have been preferred in English to other lines, because it is the only form that has not a tendency to break up regularly into some shorter form.[3]

[3] The alexandrine holds a corresponding place in French verse. It is not, however, like the English alexandrine, a hexameter with a tendency to break in the middle, but a twelve syllable line with a continually changing meter. It may be in turn trimeter, tetrameter,

The constant use of the line in successive ages of our poetry has given it a remarkably varied development in rhythm and phrasing. Examples of one or two light stresses occurring in different portions in the line have been given in Chapter II, examples of lines with light endings, and of passages with continual shifting of the position of the cesura have been given in Chapter III. The changes in rhythmic pattern exemplified in Chapter IV were chiefly the variations that the poets have used from the iambic pentameter norm. All the changes in the flow of rhythm that we found occurring in the octosyllabic couplet may also be found in the various uses of the pentameter line, with the advantage of the added scope for variety which five feet would give over four. A great many kinds of variation from the iambic rhythm have been practiced by slowing up the line with extra accents, or hurrying it with the ripple of one or two trisyllabic feet. The only limit in modern pentameters to such variation is that it should not occur frequently enough in a poem or passage to change the general character of iambic movement for more than a line or two; the distinct departure from this movement that is to be found in the tetrameters of *Christabel* has never been admitted in pentameter verse. Moreover, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, poets seem to have a distinct prejudice against lines of less than ten syllables, though trochaic lines of seven syllables are very common in many forms of tetrameter verse. All these points have been presented in Chapter IV.

One of the commonest variations in the use of pentameter lines is the introduction of a certain type of ten syllable tetrameter, which makes a complete break in the iambic movement. The most quoted line of Pope's *Essay on Man* is an example. This may be read as a pentameter,

The | proper | study | of man- | kind is | man,

or even pentameter, or hexameter; and thus have a complete change in rhythm from line to line. *See* M. Grammont: *Vers Français*, Paris, 1904.

with a light stress at the beginning of the third foot; but nine readers out of ten, reading naturally and without thought of metrical theory, will huddle the second and third foot together so that they have approximately the same time value as one foot; *i. e.*, the line is read in four time parts instead of five,

The | proper | study of man- | kind is | man.

A natural reading of the two following lines from *Hamlet* will show by contrast how distinctive this type is:

For I have that within that passeth show
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

Any reader who does not read verse as prose would, of course, give the first line five time parts and a perfect iambic movement. The second line read after the same pattern sounds very stiff and awkward:

These | but the | trappings | and the | suits of | woe.

The usual reading will divide this into four time parts and completely upset the iambic movement that characterized the preceding line:

| These but the | trappings and the | suits of | woe.[4]

The distinctive point of this tetrameter is that it must have four syllables in the second foot; it may always be read as pentameter by dividing this foot into two and adding a light stress, should anyone prefer such a reading. For some inexplicable reason no other type of tetrameter line may be substituted in a context of pentameters without a sensitive ear regarding it as a careless error on the part of the poet or reader.

[4] The theory that such lines in heroic verse are really read as tetrameters was first put forth by Professor C. W. Cobb in 1910 ("A type of Four-Stress Verse in Shakespeare," *New Shakespeareana* 10:1). He added objective evidence for the theory, based on experiments in the psychological laboratory of the University of Michigan in "A Scientific Basis for Metrics," *Modern Language Notes*, May, 1913.

This can be made clear by a study of ten lines of Pope's *Rape of the Lock:*

Know further yet: whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embrac'd;
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?

Lines 4, 5, and 10 are of the type that nearly every reader will read in four time parts, and yet they fit most agreeably into the context of pentameters. If, however, we substitute three lines of other types of tetrameter, they will not go at all successfully with the pentameters, *e. g.*

For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume a sex or a shape as they please.
What guards the honor of melting maids,
In courtly balls and midnight masquerades, . . .
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music melts, when dancing fires?

These underlined tetrameters have respectively ten, nine, and eight syllables, but all alike fail to combine pleasingly with the pentameters. The only type of tetrameter that can do this is the one that has four syllables huddled into the second foot.[5]

[5] I have heard a few readers also make tetrameters out of lines of the type,

The glance by day, the whisper in the dark (line 8, above),

where the light stress in the fourth place makes them huddle the third and fourth foot into one:

The | glance by | day, the | whisper in the | dark.

This, however, in a pentameter passage I find very displeasing to my ear, and I think most readers will agree with me.

A convincing proof that this type of line is actually read as tetrameter may be found in the fact that the poets have occasionally included it in passages of undoubted tetrameter verse. Blake, whose versification was guided by an ear uninfluenced by theories, has done this in several places, *e. g.*

> Why art thou silent and invisible,
> Father of Jealousy?
> Why dost thou hide thyself in clouds
> From every searching eye?
> (*Father of Jealousy.*)

The tetrameter of parts of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, as has been noted in Chapter X, contains many lines that can be read as pentameters, though the author doubtless intended them for tetrameters, *e. g.*

> Tho went the pensife Damme out of dore,
> And chaunst to stomble at the threshold flore:
> Her stombling steppe some what her amazed.

Shelley furnishes a few examples of the same thing.

> Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,

would do just as well in his heroic verse as in the tetrameter context of *A Vision of the Sea.*[6] The recent American poet, Vachel Lindsay, clearly recognizes the dual personality of this line, for he not only uses it in his pentameter verse—as all English poets from Chaucer on have done—but also employs it with striking effect in the midst of his tetrameter rhythms:

> And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
> At the baboon butler in the agate door,

[6] Professor Cobb, in "A Further Study of the Heroic Tetrameter," (*Modern Philology*, 1916), has collected many more cases of the same sort, which tend to show that many poets have felt the line as a tetrameter, though they followed the traditional prosodic theory.

And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.
(*Congo.*)

Why a pentameter reading (by beginning the third foot with a light stress) should not be demanded by our ears when lines of this type are read in the midst of pentameter lines, no one has successfully explained. The fact that they are read as tetrameters, however, has been admitted by many students with ears trained accurately to distinguish time values.

These lines have been employed by all writers of heroic verse as a frequent means of varying the metrical and rhythmical pattern. They are used more than any other single type of line variation, except the relief of beginning a line with a stressed syllable. They occur very sparingly as a break in the deadly monotony of Spenser's heroic verse in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, with a frequency of from six to sixteen per cent in different plays of Shakespeare, and in as high a proportion as twenty-five per cent in Fitzgerald's Omar. The use of the "heroic tetrameter" may be seen at its best in the couplets of Pope where it frequently adds finish to a pointed epigram. Though his percentage of them is high, he does not risk the monotony of using more than two in succession. How unfortunate too great a repetition of the type may become is illustrated by a school boy translation of O. W. Holmes, done while he was at Andover:

Is this your glory in a noble line
To leave your confines and to ravage mine?
Whom I—but let these troubled waves subside—
Another tempest and I'll quell your pride!
Go bear our message to your master's ear,
That wide as ocean I am despot here;
Let him sit monarch in his barren caves!
I wield the trident and control the waves.

The third line of the passage is the only one that is not likely to be read as a "heroic tetrameter."

The reader may justifiably protest against this rather disproportionate discussion of a single means of adding variety to the heroic line, but it has seemed necessary, for this special type, though very distinctive, has not had sufficient recognition by students of meter.

The commoner stanza forms in which heroic verse is used have been mentioned in Chapter IX. Its most frequent uses, in couplets and in blank verse, remain to be considered.

Heroic Couplet.—The heroic couplet has taken two forms, the "open" and the "closed," each fashionable during different periods in our literary history. The difference between the forms is a matter of phrasing. The open type allows the sense to run over from one line to another, and from one couplet to another; the closed type strictly precludes the enjambment of a couplet, and rarely allows it in a line.

The couplet began its long career in English poetry with Chaucer, who used the open variety. About sixteen per cent of his lines and seven per cent of his couplets are enjambed. The first full stop in the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* occurs at the end of the eighteenth line, but the phrasing within this period makes the lines, and often the couplets, fairly distinct. In general, a use not very different from Chaucer's was common down through the Elizabethan period. During the first quarter of the seventeenth century there developed a tendency toward writing closed couplets. Run-on lines and couplets became gradually fewer and fewer, until both practically disappeared in the polishing process which culminated in the brilliant perfection of Pope. The origin of this closed couplet has been variously attributed to Jonson, Drayton, Beaumont, Fairfax, Sandys, Waller, and Denham. But fashions in versification, like fashions in thought, are not often attributable to one man. The

more original men of similar temperament and similar background will react in the same direction.

The closed couplet continued to be the dominant verse form throughout the eighteenth century, with Pope as the chief model for hundreds of versifiers, who skilfully imitated his marvelous correctness of form. The first definite return to the older open form of the couplet was Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini*, in 1816. He was followed by Keats and Shelley, whose example completely restored the open couplet to an important place among English meters. Byron still clung to the closed form that best expressed the age of elegance and epigram, but he has not had many successors. The couplets of Browning, Morris, Swinburne, and the poets of the present generation are modeled on those of the type of Chaucer or Fletcher, rather than those of Dryden and Pope.[7]

The closed couplet may best be studied technically by analyzing a passage from Pope:

True wit is nature to advantage dress'd—
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd,
Something whose truth convinc'd at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit:
For works may have more wit than does them good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood.
Others for language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress:
Their praise is still—the style is excellent;
The sense they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and when they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.
. . . . . .
But most by numbers judge a poet's song,
And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong;

[7] The best place to study the history of the couplet with plentiful examples is Alden: *English Verse*, pp. 174-213.

In the bright Muse, though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire,
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds: as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.

(*Essay on Criticism*, II.)

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
. . . . . .
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' adventurous baron the bright locks admir'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray.

(*Rape of the Lock*, II.)

In the clear azure gleam the flocks are seen
And floating forests paint the waves with green;
Through the fair scene roll slow the lingering streams,
Then foaming pour along and rush into the Thames.

(*Windsor Forest.*)

One interesting quality of this verse is the amount of variation possible within rigid limits. The number of syllables in a line is strictly limited to ten, though an occasional elision like that in line 32 is admitted as a means of keeping to this rule. The flow of the iambic movement is varied, as in the octosyllabic couplet, by three possible changes at the beginning of the line, *i. e.*, starting it with direct attack (lines 3, 9, 13), with a heavily accented syllable preceding the first stress (lines 1, 27, 29), or with two unstressed syllables

(lines 36, 38). The "heroic tetrameter" (lines 1, 8, 19), discussed a few pages back, is used in these passages in a proportion of about one line out of six. The interesting effect of breaking the rhythm with a trisyllabic foot followed by a monosyllabic occurs very sparingly in Pope but is occasionally admitted, as in,

Th' ad- | venturous | baron the | bright | locks ad- | mired

(though Pope may have meant such lines to be read,

Th' ad- | venturous | baron | thè brîght | locks ad- | mired).

A trisyllabic foot without a compensating one of a single syllable is not admitted in Pope's prosody.

The rare use of an alexandrine (line 39) was in accord with the practice of Dryden, but Pope later condemned it in a celebrated couplet:

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.[8]

The trochaic phrasing in the amusing enumeration of,

Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux,

is a sort of rhythmical joke Pope now and then indulges in.

The phrasing of these couplets, the point over which prosodic war was waged in the seventeenth century, and again in the nineteenth, shows the closed type in its extreme form. There are no run-on lines; that is, the few lines (5, 13, 17, 34) that suspend the meaning until the following line have at least a grammatical pause at the end.[9] Every couplet

[8] The cleverness of this example lies in the phrasing at the end of it, where the extra accent on *slôw* seems to draw the line out even longer than its six feet demand.

[9] There is a small percentage of run-on lines in Pope, particularly in the *Satires* and in the *Essay on Man*, *e. g.*

but one is complete in itself, or adds to the sense of the preceding; lines 28-31 show the only use of a periodic structure running through two couplets.

The management of the cesura in lines of closed couplets was a point about which the eighteenth century was very strict. Pope's own rule for this is as follows:[10] "Every nice ear must, I believe, have observed that in any smooth English verse of ten syllables, there is naturally a pause either at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllables. . . . Now I fancy that, to preserve an exact harmony and variety, none of these pauses should be continued above three lines together; else it will be apt to weary the ear with one continued tone—at least it does mine." Pope's definition of cesura apparently included any grammatical or rhetorical pause in a line, whether marked by punctuation or not. Cesuras, therefore, occur after *nature* in the first line, and after *truth* in the third, as well as after *thought* in the second. Cesuras, in Pope's sense of the word, will be found in about the middle of nearly every line in the selections quoted, and with the slight variation that he recommends. The majority of readers, however, would probably find a few exceptions. Though the antithesis in such lines as,

So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit,

seems to demand at least a slight rhetorical pause in the middle, there is no particular reason for any cesura in such lines as,

For works may have more wit than does them good;

and the line,

When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains
. . . . . .
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's, use and end.

[10] Letter to Cromwell (1710), quoted in Saintsbury: *History of English Prosody*, 2, 472.

Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire,

if it is read with any cesura at all, must have it after the second syllable. Apparently, then, the rule of writing lines with a slight pause after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable is one that, like the rule forbidding enjambment, is to be generally, but not invariably, observed.

One more means of gaining variety in the couplet is the adding of a third line rimed with the two preceding and phrased to effect a climax. The result is called a triplet, an effect introduced only at rare intervals. It is often set off from the couplets by a brace (*e. g.* lines 19-21).

All these means of avoiding monotony, which are merely catalogued here and illustrated in several disconnected passages, should be studied in some single poem of Pope, the *Rape of the Lock* for satiric narrative, or the *Essay on Criticism* for brilliant epigrammatic exposition. Pope's poems, however, are not the best to imitate in paragraph structure; Pope thought and wrote in clever but disconnected epigrams. An ideal *Essay on Man* or *Essay on Criticism* would be expressed in verse paragraphs as coherent as those of good prose.

There are some other dangers that the writer of this kind of couplet may easily fall into. The necessity of confining one's expression in a mold so definitely fixed may cause one to neglect the slight rhythmic variations, the shifting of cesuras, etc., that are permitted, and, in fact, demanded in order to relieve the ear. The more fixed the norm in any art, the greater necessity for slight changes from the pattern, to avoid being "icily regular, splendidly null." A constant use of the medial pause in every line will give a monotonous rise and fall that may become unendurable. Pope, as has been pointed out, realized that overmuch antithesis is tiresome, and frequently phrased his lines without the medial pause. The greatest danger of all is padding the verse with epithets—a danger inherent in any Procrustean couch for poetic thought. This may be made clear by reading the

opening lines of Pope's *Iliad* without the adjectives that are underlined:[11]

> Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
> Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly Goddess, sing!
> That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
> The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain;
> Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,
> Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore.

Read this way, they make very good octosyllabics. This fault of padding is not characteristic of most of Pope's work, but in his weaker followers the "tyranny of the epithet" was a bondage hard to escape.

In spite of these obvious dangers the closed couplet in skilful hands may give a high degree of pleasure to a certain type of reader. A complete appreciation of it as a verse form requires a sense of rhythm which is conscious of, and finds delight in subtle variations from a narrowly restricted norm. A reader with a nice ear, a fine sense of the phrase, and a keen relish for the wit which dresses nature to advantage, will turn from the unrestrained and unexpected rhythms of modern free-verse makers to the formal elegance of Pope, with the reassuring relief with which one hears Mozart after listening to Schoenberg.

Though the closed couplet through the period of its greatest popularity from Dryden's *Absalom* to Byron's *Lara*, was employed for nearly every kind of poetry—satiric, didactic, descriptive, narrative, elegiac—the poems in this form that are still read are chiefly the satiric and didactic. The terse expressiveness of the couplet, the possibilities it offers of balance, antithesis, and climax, and its aptness in epigram make it a perfect dress for wit, cleverness and common sense; but the same rhetorical qualities crib and confine deeper feeling and higher imagination. At present, the

[11] This example was given by Scott in his introduction to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

form is hardly popular. Even Austin Dobson, who has, more than any other modern poet, the courtly charm of the age of minuets, miniatures, and snuff-boxes, scarcely ever writes in couplets. Oliver Wendell Holmes was one of the later wits who appreciated the perfect fitness of the form for "occasional" verse. A glance through his poems written for public dinners and academic banquets convinces one that there is no other form so suitable for sparkling, convivial fun and the keen flash of epigram. Austin Dobson's *Dialogue to the Memory of Mr. Alexander Pope* is a splendid appreciation of the capabilities of the closed couplet in the hands of its greatest master. It may be quoted as a perfect example of the form it praises:

> What Art supreme, what Elegance, what Ease!
> How keen the Irony, the Wit how bright,
> The Style how rapid, and the Verse how light!
> Then read once more, and you shall wonder yet
> At Skill, at Turn, at Point, at Epithet.
> . . . . . .
> But Pope took up his Parable, and knit
> The Woof of Wisdom with the Warp of Wit;
> He trimmed the Measure on its equal Feet,
> And smooth'd and fitted till the Line was neat;
> He taught the Pause with one effect to fall;
> He taught the epigram to come at call.
> . . . . . .
> So I that love the old Augustan Days
> Of formal Courtesies and formal Phrase;
> That like along the finish'd Line to feel
> The Ruffle's Flutter and the Flash of Steel;
> That like my Couplet as compact as clear;
> That like my Satire sparkling tho' severe,
> Unmix'd with Pathos and unmarr'd by Trope,
> I fling my Cap for Polish—and for Pope!

The "open" type of the heroic couplet may be studied in a rather extreme form in Keats's *Endymion:*

A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest break,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

The iambic movement of the passage is only slightly more varied than in the passages from Pope. Keats is almost as strict as Pope in adhering to the ten syllable norm. The exceptions are that Keats uses more lines with light endings (feminine rimes) than Pope would tolerate, and also prints *every*, *the inhuman*, and *the unhealthy*, instead of indulging in the typographical fiction of *ev'ry*, *th' inhuman*, and *th' unhealthy*. Keats also admits more frequently lines of the type of,

Trees | old and | young, | sprouting a | shady | boon,

which are quite rare in Pope; and even introduces such a rhythmic change as,

With the | green | world they | live in; and | clear | rills,

—an impossible effect to Pope. A considerably greater freedom of rhythm in the couplet is to be found in the passage quoted from Swinburne, below, on page 194; but even there the freedom comes from the frequency with which the changes so far mentioned are introduced, rather than from the introduction of new variations.

As was mentioned in the last chapter, the history of the heroic couplet has not shown development to any extent in rhythmic changes, as has been the case with the tetrameter couplet, but this development has been almost wholly a question of phrasing. The verse paragraph from *Endymion* is phrased so that about half of the lines have no punctuation at the end, and the more important pauses in the sense, marked by periods, colons, or semicolons, occur oftener within the line than at its close. More than this, there is not a single couplet that makes complete sense in itself. In fact, even where the lines have marked pauses at the end (lines 5, 19, 21) the sense splits the couplet in half. Apparently the poet is studiously keeping the couplet structure from prominence. The rime, therefore, is added purely as an ornament, not used to make distinct the end of the line or to emphasize important words. An example of couplets in which the rime is even less conspicuous is Browning's *My Last Duchess*, quoted to illustrate this point in Chapter VII.[12]

[12] Perhaps the most extreme case in English of enjambment in the couplet is William Chamberlayne's *Pharonnida* (1659):

> . . . had worn out the morning in
> Chase of a stately stag; which, having been
> Forced from the forest's safe protection to
> Discovering plain, his clamorous foes had drew
> Up to a steep cliff's lofty top; where he,
> As if grown proud so sacrificed to be
> To man's delight,
> . . . . . .

That the rime in Keats's poem is purely an ornament, Professor Lewis[13] makes quite evident by turning the passage quoted into very good blank verse by a few slight alterations:

> A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will ne'er
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a slumber
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet brooding.
> Therefore, on every morrow, do we wreathe
> A flowery band to bind us to this world,
> Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
> Of noble natures, of the gloomy years,
> Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
> Made for our searching.

But it is not necessary for the writer of couplets to choose either of the extreme types—that of the *Rape of the Lock*, or of *Endymion*. Chaucer's *Prologue* and many of the *Canterbury Tales*, Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini* and much of William Morris's *Earthly Paradise* use forms of the open couplet that keep the structure always evident to the ear, but without the rigidity of eighteenth century phrasing. The moderate freedom of this couplet makes it perhaps our finest medium for romantic story-telling. It has not been a favorite with modern poets since Morris and Swinburne, but if the present revival of interest in verse narrative continues, the couplet is sure to come back into favor. Here is an example of Morris's use:

> Their fear thus cured by information, he
> That his appearance in the court might be
> More glorious made by such attendants, to
> Incite in them a strong desire to view
> Those royal pastimes. . . .

It is difficult to understand why a poet should take the trouble to rime several thousand lines and then try to conceal the fact by frequent passages like these!

[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

A nameless city in a distant sea,
White as the changing walls of faerie,
Thronged with much people clad in ancient guise
I am now fain to set before your eyes;
There leave the clear green water and the quays,
And pass betwixt its marble palaces,
Until ye come unto the chiefest square;
A bubbling conduit is set midmost there,
And round about it now the maidens throng,
With jest and laughter, and sweet broken song,
Making but light of labor new begun
While in their vessels gleams the morning sun.

On one side of the square a temple stands,
Wherein the gods worshipped in ancient lands,
Still have their altars; a great market place
Upon two other sides fills all the space,
And thence the busy hum of men comes forth;
But on the cold side looking toward the north
A pillared council-house may you behold,
Within whose porch are images of gold,
Gods of the nations who dwelt anciently
About the borders of the Grecian Sea.

(*Earthly Paradise*—Prologue.)

That the rime is a very important element in the structure of these couplets, and more than a merely ornamental effect, is made clear by imitating Professor Lewis' experiment with the lines from *Endymion.*

A nameless city in a distant clime,
White as the changing walls of faerie,
Thronged with much people clad in ancient garb
I am now fain to set before your eyes;
There, leave the clear green water and the piers,
And pass betwixt its marble palaces,
Until ye come unto the chiefest mart;
A bubbling conduit is set midmost there,
And round about it now the maidens throng.

This makes monotonous blank verse, though, of course, not so bad as Pope's couplets would be, similarly ill-treated.

The two forms of couplet, open and closed, have each their most effective use and their weak tendencies. The epigrams of Pope or the wit of Holmes couched in run-on couplets would be insipid; the exuberant imagination of the young Keats fettered in the tight couplet would seem like wild wood flowers in an Italian garden. The eighteenth century form, as we have seen, was in danger from a tiresome use of epithets; but tended, in general, to conciseness of thought. The open type, on the other hand,—particularly in its extremely run-on form—lures the poet into mazes of figure and prolixity of expression. Swinburne falls into this danger of over-embellishment frequently in his *Tristram of Lyonesse*—in the description of Iseult's eyes, for instance:

> The very veil of her bright flesh was made
> As of light woven and moonbeam-coloured shade
> More fine than moonbeams; white her eyelids shone
> As snow sun-stricken that endures the sun,
> And through their curled and coloured clouds of deep
> Luminous lashes thick as dreams in sleep
> Shone as the sea's depth swallowing up the sky's
> The springs of unimaginable eyes.
> As the wave's subtler emerald is pierced through
> With the utmost heaven's inextricable blue,
> And both are woven and molten in one sleight
> Of amorous colour and implicated light
> Under the golden guard and gaze of noon,
> So glowed their awless amorous plenilune,
> Azure and gold and ardent grey, made strange
> With fiery difference and deep interchange
> Inexplicable of glories multiform;
> Now as the sullen sapphire swells toward storm
> Foamless, their bitter beauty grew a-cold,
> And now a-fire with ardour of fine gold.

The reader is in danger of losing himself so completely in

this gorgeous orchid-jungle of words that he forgets what they are all about. The closer phrasing and shorter clauses of Chaucer and William Morris, which tend to check such flights, make safer guides for the beginner with the couplet form.

CHAPTER XII

Blank Verse

Blank verse is a term sometimes used broadly for any kind of unrimed verse, including lyrics with unrimed stanzas composed of regular or irregular line patterns, and even for "free verse." More properly the term blank verse is applied only to unrimed iambic pentameter. Blank verse (in this latter sense) holds the place of greatest distinction among English verse forms. During the three and a half centuries in which it has been in use it has been made capable of great flexibility and of variation in many directions.

Blank verse was first used in English by the Earl of Surrey[1] in his translation of the fourth book of the Æneid (1557). It was adopted by the authors of *Gorboduc* (1562) as the form for the earliest English tragedy. After being further used by Kyd and Peele, and brought to a high state of perfection by Marlowe, it became the great medium of dramatic expression for Shakespeare and the whole brilliant constellation of his contemporaries. The Jacobean and Caroline dramatists continued to use it even in most of their comedies of humors and manners. After the dramatic interregnum it ceased to be generally used for comedy, and during the earlier period of Dryden was displaced in tragedy, for a time, by the heroic couplet. Later, Dryden and Otway restored the use of it in tragedy. Milton, by writing *Paradise Lost* (1667) in blank verse, made it the form for subsequent English epics and much narrative verse. In the eighteenth century, Aikenside, Thompson, Cowper, and others employed it for long reflective and descriptive poems. Through the

[1] It is generally supposed to have been suggested to him by the *versi sciolti* of the Italians.

same period it was still used in the classic tragedies of Addison and Johnson and the romantic work of the type of Home's *Douglas*. In the nineteenth century, the form has appeared at its best in the reflective poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, and in some of the long narrative poems of Keats, Arnold, Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne. Verse drama in the last century is at its best in Byron's *Manfred* and Shelley's *Cenci*, though there are interesting attempts by Lytton, Knowles, Talfourd, Tennyson, and Browning. Among recent poets, one of the most distinctive in his use of blank verse is William Butler Yeats. There are other less original examples among the poems or plays of Laurence Binyon, Alfred Noyes, Stephen Phillips, and Robert Bridges.

A historical survey of the use of blank verse shows that it has been the medium for the most widely diversified types of poetic thought. The greatness of the form lies in its extraordinary flexibility, its fitness for varied moods, and its yielding to distinctive treatment in individual hands. Through it have been perfectly expressed the rage of Lear, the advice of Polonius, the out-nighting of Lorenzo and Jessica, the sublime horrors of Milton's hell, the finding of Excaliber, the delirium of Browning's Bishop, and the easy colloquialism of Mr. Sludge.[2]

[2] For examples from which to study different types of blank verse the reader may find the following suggestions useful. Three stages in Shakespearian use may be studied by comparing *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and the *Tempest*. For interesting modern dramatic verse, Browning's *Blot in the Scutcheon*, Yeats's *Land of Heart's Desire*, Richard Hovey's *Launcelot and Guinevere*, and William Vaughn Moody's *Firebringer* are good examples. The dramatic monologues, *Andrea del Sarto*, *The Bishop Orders his Tomb*, *Mr. Sludge the Medium*, as well as *The Ring and the Book*, show what variety and individuality Browning could give the form. Tennyson's *Ulysses* and Rossetti's *Last Confession* are not to be overlooked if one is interested in blank verse monologues. Examples of narrative and descriptive blank verse useful for models may be found in the first four books of *Paradise Lost*, in Keats's *Hyperion*, Shelley's *Alastor*, Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, Tennyson's

In all these uses of blank verse the differences in type and in individual practice are made possible by the wide diversity in phrasing of which the form is capable. Phrasing, as has been explained in the discussions in Chapters II and VI, deals with the relation of the prose rhythm of the words with the superimposed verse rhythm and line structure. The technical difference between the lines uttered by Lear on the heath and those in which Thomson describes an April shower is the difference in the degree of conflict between the two forces of prose and verse rhythm. The elements of this struggle have been discussed in the first part of this book in the consideration of light stress, extra accent, and other rhythmical changes, as well as of enjambment and the shifting of the cesura.

The simplest conflict in the matter of phrasing is that brought about by the introduction of light stresses. Compare the two following passages in this respect.

That to each force of foreign princes' power
Whom vantage of our wretched state may move
By sudden arms to gain so rich a realm,
And to the proud and greedy mind at home
Whom blinded lust to reign leads to aspire,
Lo, Britain realm is left an open prey,
A present spoil by conquest to ensue!
Who seeth not now how many rising minds
Do feed their thoughts with hope to reach a realm?
And who will not by force attempt to win
So great a gain, that hope persuades to have?
(*Gorboduc*, V, ii.)

And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
On courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies straight;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;

Idylls, Stephen Phillips's *Marpessa*, and Alfred Noyes's *Drake*. Among the best examples of reflective blank verse are Coleridge's *Nightingale* and *Hymn before Sunrise*, Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, and Bryant's *Thanatopsis*.

O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail
Tickling a parson's nose as a lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice.
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five fathom deep.

(*Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv.)

The two passages are composed very largely of end-stopped lines. The one from *Gorboduc* has absolutely no lines of irregular rhythm and that from *Romeo and Juliet* has but four (8, 10, 11, 13), three of which (8, 10, 13) may be made regular by reading them as pentameters with light stresses instead of as "heroic tetrameters."[3] But the great difference between the two selections is that the scarcity of light stresses in the first—only eight in eleven lines—gives it an almost perfect and unrelieved iambic phrasing and iambic rhythm. Such monotonous lines as

Do feed their thoughts with hope to reach a realm,

or

So great a gain, that hope persuades to have,

with their complete coincidence of phrasing and rhythm, nowhere occur in the Shakespearian passage, which has twenty light stresses in fifteen lines. A considerable proportion—at least one out of five in the long run—of the stresses in blank verse must be light in order to avoid the first cause of monotony which besets a crude versifier. The wastes of dull verse through the three dreary parts of *Henry*

[3] *See above*, pp. 177 ff.

VI show that the prentice Shakespeare had many things to learn in this regard before he became master of his artistic medium. The verse of these early plays shows but little advance over that of *Gorboduc*.

But a proper proportion of light stresses will not alone insure verse against monotony; the position of the light stresses must be varied from line to line lest the rhythmic effect be identical in several successive lines. In the following eight lines, the fourth stress is invariably light, and in five of the lines the second is also light.

> Gamaliel sat at evening on his roof
> And deeply mused the meaning of the law.
> The holy city round about him lay,
> Magnificent, encircled with her hills.
> Jerusalem was glorious to behold.
> And sunlit with her temple in the midst,
> Fast founded like the basis of the world,
> The glory of the temple of the Lord!

The effect of these last five lines, identical in rhythm, is almost to establish a new norm, trimeter with quadruple rhythm, in place of the pentameter division of blank verse. A similar change is effected by making the middle stress consistently light in too many successive lines. In the following six lines, there are five which may be read as "heroic tetrameters," or at any rate, have weak stresses exactly in the middle.

> These are the face
> And form of beauty, but her heart and life
> Shall they be who shall see it, born to shield
> A happier birthright with intrepid arms,
> To tread down tyranny and fashion forth
> A virgin wisdom to subdue the world,
> To build for passion an eternal song.
> (Robert Bridges: *Firegiver*.)

The reader may prefer not to consider that the norm has

actually been changed in the last two passages quoted, but he must admit that the effect of these uses of light stresses is exceedingly tiresome.

Occasionally in the rimed verse of Rossetti and Morris an effect of subtle delicacy is produced by making the last stress weak, but in the following from Hardy's blank verse there seems no special reason for so large a proportion of weak fifth stresses.

> But out of tune the mode and meritless
> That quickens sense in shapes whom, Thou has said,
> Necessitation sways! A life there was
> Among these self-same frail ones—Sophocles
> Who visioned it too clearly, even the while
> He dubbed the Will "the gods." Truly said he,
> "Such gross injustice to their own creation
> Burdens the time with mournfulness for us,
> And for themselves in the shame."—Things mechanized
> By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes
> Would, in a thorough-sphered melodic rule,
> And governance of sweet consistency,
> Be cessed no pain, whose burnings would abide
> With that which holds responsibility,
> Or inexist.
>
> (*Dynasts*, Vol. I, p. 165.)

The question of handling light stresses becomes of the greatest importance in writing blank verse, as one may see by reading the last three quotations aloud. In rimed verse the poet may pay less regard to this distribution of light stresses, or, to the more obvious rhythmic changes, because the ornament of rime distracts the ear, and blemishes and subtleties alike may escape attention.

If blank verse has too large a proportion of light stresses the effect may be either prosaic, as in Browning's

> Historical and philosophical,
>
> (*Red Cotton Night-Cap Country.*)

and,

> Such spirits' individuality,
>
> (*Mr. Sludge.*)

or it may sound thin, as in Stephen Phillips's

> Some days I may be absent, and can go
> More lightly since I leave you not alone.
> To Paolo I commend you, to my brother.
> Loyal he is to me, loyal and true.
> He has also a gaiety of mind.
>
> (*Paolo,* IV.)

This last line is particularly feeble. The weakness of the Wordsworthian parody, the combined effort of Tennyson and Fitzgerald,—

> A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman,—

lies in the fact that, though the line has technically three full stresses, they all fall on very colorless words.

This matter of diction has an important effect in another way. It may incline a reader to give a line a different rhythm and even a different meter from that intended by the poet. The natural prose rhythm of the words leads one astray in some of the Miltonic lines quoted in Chapter II.

> And made him bow to the gods of his wives,

and,

> Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
>
> (*Paradise Regained,* II.)

are likely to require a second reading to make them pentameter. It is possible that Milton's inability to read his own manuscript prevented his recognizing that the phrasing of these lines would incline one toward a tetrameter reading. Such lines do not occur in his earlier poems.

The more colloquial the diction, the more likely is the

reader to be in doubt of the rhythm, for the very familiar rhythm of speech gives a swing against the established pattern of the verse, and we omit the necessary light stresses because they sound forced and artificial. The verse of Robert Frost's *North of Boston*, because of its very colloquial diction, has many lines annoyingly uncertain at the first reading, *e. g.*

> I see it's a fair, pretty sheet of water,
> Our Willoughby! How did you hear of it?
> I expect, though, everyone's heard of it.
> In a book about ferns? Listen to that!
> You let things more like feathers regulate
> Your going and coming. And so you like it here?
> I can see how you might. But I don't know!

William Butler Yeats seems to have a fondness occasionally for phrasing that is intentionally doubtful, that gives wavering uncertain rhythms appropriate for intangible Celtic dreams. The reader may find more than one way of reading several of the following lines and find subtle enjoyment in their hesitancy:

> Once a fly dancing in a beam of the sun,
> Or the light wind blowing out of the dawn,
> Could fill your heart with dreams none other knew,
> But now the indissoluble sacrament . . .
> . . . . . .
> But your white spirit still walks by my spirit.
> (*Land of Heart's Desire.*)

> She followed in the light footfall in the midst,
> Till it died out where an old thorn tree stood.
> . . . . . .
> But out of the dark air over her head there came
> A murmur of soft words and meeting lips.
> (*Old Age of Queen Maeve.*)

The discussion of stresses has already brought us to the consideration of changes in rhythm. There are, of course,

more apparent changes than those introduced by light or wavering stresses. There are lines in all good blank verse which the poet undoubtedly intended to be read with the effect of monosyllabic and trisyllabic feet interrupting the iambic norm.[4]

A trisyllabic foot when not occurring too frequently may have no particularly characteristic effect, as in,

'Twere | good she were | spoken | with; for | she may | strew,
(*Hamlet.*)

or,

Hail to your lordship. I'm glad to see you well.
(*Hamlet.*)

This extra syllable is especially common when, as in the last example, it occurs before or after the cesura. When, however, more than one such foot is introduced in a line, an effect of lightness is given to the verse, often suggesting impatience, hurry or activity, as,

But | I'll not | wrangle but | with this | talkative | knife.
(Yeats: *Baile's Strand.*)

Some witch of the air has troubled Cuchulain's mind.
(*Ibid.*)

That drift into the mind at a wink of the eye.
(Yeats: *Land of Heart's Desire.*)

Browning gains a careless colloquial manner by using trisyllabic feet through several successive lines, *e. g.*

Comes from the hopper as bran-new Sludge, naught else,
The Shaker's hymn in G, with a natural F,
Or the "Stars and Stripes" set to consecutive fourths.
(*Mr. Sludge.*)

[4] Though, of course, the poet's own theory of prosody—if he had any—may not have called them so.

Tickling men's ears—the sect for a quarter of an hour
I' the teeth of the world which clown-like loves to chew.
(*Ring and Book*, I.)

The most usual rhythmic variation is the interruption of the iambic movement by a monosyllabic foot preceded or followed by a trisyllabic, *e. g.*

Of | night and | day and the | deep | heart of | man.
(Shelley: *Alastor.*)

In the | wide | pathless | desert of | dim | sleep.
(*Ibid.*)

Nor God alone in the still calm we find.
(Browning: *Ring and Book*, I.)

The rings of light quivered like forest-leaves.
(Rossetti: *A Last Confession.*)

Interesting effects are produced by repeating this combination twice in a line, *e. g.*

To the | first | good, first | perfect, and | first | fair.
(Browning: *Ring and Book*, I.)

And | wasted for | fond | love of his | wild | eyes.
(Shelley: *Alastor.*)

In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven.
(*Ibid.*)

I found it slip, easy as an old shoe.
(Browning: *Mr. Sludge.*)

Out of the cold dark of the rich sea.
(Yeats: *On Baile's Strand.*)

As of the sky and sea on a gray day.
(Rossetti: *A Last Confession.*)

And all the waves of the world faint to the moon.
(S. Phillips: *Paolo and Francesca.*)

A voice singing on a May eve like this.
(Yeats: *Land of Heart's Desire.*)

A strange song for a child but she sings sweetly.
(*Ibid.*)

Into the evening green wandered away.
(S. Phillips: *Marpessa.*)

All these interruptions of the iambic movement of the passages in which they are found seem to be introduced purely for the pleasure which rhythmic variation gives modern ears. Their phrasing does not seem to be particularly suggestive of the thought expressed, except in so far as any change in rhythm calls attention to thought, just as alliteration may. These rhythmic changes, however, may, in combination with tone-color and alliteration, produce very suggestive and often imitative lines. The following examples are worth analyzing from this point of view. The effects come from uses of light stress, extra accent, monosyllabic and trisyllabic feet, and tone-color—all combining with the meaning and connotation of the words.

The sound of many a heavily galloping hoof.
(Tennyson.)

Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen.[5]
(Tennyson: *Passing of Arthur.*)

Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold.
(*Paradise Lost,* IV.)

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm.[6]
(Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

A thousand piers ran into the great sea.
(Tennyson: *Holy Grail.*)

[5] Besides the sheer sound of the words, notice the rhythm produced by direct attack combined with a light stress in the fourth place.

[6] The extra accent on long slows the beginning of the line and the rhythm is sharply interrupted in the middle.

Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
(*Ibid.*)

A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill.
(Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave.
(*Ibid.*)

Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere.
(Tennyson: *Princess.*)

Hammering and clinking, chattering strong names.
(*Ibid.*)

Tumbled it, oilily bubbled up the mere.
(Tennyson: *Gareth and Lynette.*)

The mutter and rumble of the trolling bowls
Down the lean plank, before they fluttered the pins.
(Henley: *Arabian Nights.*)

Clang battleaxe and clash brand! Let the King reign.
(Tennyson: *Coming of Arthur.*)

Doubted and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak.
(*Ibid.*)

With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep.[7]
(*Paradise Lost*, III.)

Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait.
(*Ibid.*, VII.)

The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
(Shelley: *Alastor.*)

Frantic with dizzying anguish her blind flight.
(*Ibid.*)

[7] Lowell (Essay on Milton) reads this line with the unusual accent, ínviśible.

The question of how often to use phrasing which introduces such marked changes in rhythm as have been exemplified in the last few pages must be determined by the individual poet; there can, naturally, be no rule. Poems wholly made up of lines of the type here quoted as exceptions, would be bizarre *tours de force*. The iambic movement must be kept clearly as the norm of blank verse from which such lines occasionally depart. In modern verse, from twenty-five to fifty per cent of the lines have some marked rhythmic change, other than that effected by light stresses. Less than twenty-five, except in a short poem, would approach dangerously near monotony; and more than fifty, except in a passage unusually dramatic, would seem obviously forced and inartistic. Statistics and percentages in this discussion can mean but little, for though a poem might have fifty per cent of its lines variants from the iambic rhythm, if only one or two kinds of variation were used, we should have merely the exchange of one tiresome effect for another. Two of our greatest blank verse poems, Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* and Shelley's *Alastor*, differ widely in respect to rhythm; one is an example of reflective blank verse with but little rhythmic relief, and the other an illustration of highly romantic, imaginative narrative with much musical variation in rhythm.

An analysis of a few examples may be useful in making clear how much variation has been used by the poets. Here is a passage from Tennyon's *Holy Grail* with a high percentage of lines in which most readers would find some interruption in the iambic rhythm, though few of the variations are at all unusual in themselves.

> But when the next day brake from under ground—
> O brother, had you known our Camelot,
> Built by old kings, age after age, so old
> The King himself had fears that it would fall,
> So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
> Totter'd toward each other in the sky,

Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden weighed the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners named us each by name
Calling "God speed!" but in the ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,
"This madness has come on us for our sins."
So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way.

The commonest variation here—and this is true of any extended use of the pentameter—is that produced by beginning a line with direct attack like,

Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers.

Seven lines, in my own reading, are of this type.[8] Lines that have three syllables in other feet than the first are 3, 8, 9, 19, 21. The only "heroic tetrameter" seems to be,

Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls.

There are but two lines in the whole passage that have an unusual and individual rhythm:

Built by old kings, age after age, so old,

and,

So to the gate of the Three Queens we came.

It should be added that the frequent use of light stresses, the

[8] Some readers might not read lines 3 and 12 in this way.

result of prose rhythm conflicting with the established iambic, gives another constant source of variety.

The flow of the rhythm of the following lines from Shelley's *Alastor* is now interrupted and now hurried by the repeated use of all the devices that we have discussed so far.

Hither the poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustomed presence, and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A spirit seemed
To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—
But, undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was,—only . . . when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness, . . . two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

This passage, as I prefer to read it, has four lines (1, 5, 8, 14) beginning with direct attack, and two (3, 10) that begin with two unstressed syllables. Beside lines with these very common initial changes there are seven (3, 5, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22) which have some less usual rhythmic interruption within the line. If we compare the total number of lines with irregularities in the passage from *Adonais* with the total number in the passage from the *Holy Grail* the pro-

portion seems to be about the same, but we should take into consideration the fact that but two of the Tennysonian lines are striking in rhythmic change, as compared with seven such in the Shelleyian passage. This gives the second quotation a much more unusual character than the first. Moreover, there are five of the Shelleyian lines (4, 13, 15, 17, 19) which I should read as "heroic tetrameters," as compared with one in the other passage. And lines of this type really introduce a rhythmic change more distinctive than any other form produced by a mere light stress. When we take these lines into consideration, too, we find but barely eight left, out of the twenty-three from Shelley, in which the iambic movement is not disturbed in some way. In such blank verse, then, this movement is but an ideal around which the phrasing constantly plays, but with which it only occasionally coincides.[9]

Here is one more interesting piece of verse in which irregular rhythms suggestively follow the thought:

The little golden hynde
Whirled like an autumn leaf through league on league
Of bursting seas, chaos on crashing chaos,
A rolling wilderness of charging Alps
That shook the world with their tremendous war;
Grim beetling cliffs that grappled with clamorous gulfs,
Valleys that yawned to swallow the wide heaven;
Immense white-flowering fluctuant precipices,
And hills that swooped down at the throat of hell;
From Pole to Pole, a blanching bursting storm
Of world-wide oceans, where the huge Pacific
Roared greetings to the Atlantic and both swept

[9] I wish to emphasize the statement made so often before in this work, that this analysis is based merely on my own reading. A reader who prefers to minimize irregularities in rhythm may read half of the lines I have discussed, with light stresses and extra accents. One whose feeling for rhythm is not too near that of the eighteenth century will prefer to let the rhythm yield to the sense whenever possible, in reading verses like these from Shelley.

In broad white cataracts, league on struggle league,
Pursuing and pursued, immeasurable,
With Titan hands grasping the rent black sky
East, West, North, South.
(Alfred Noyes: *Drake*, Book IV.)

The analysis of this may be left to the student. He should study the changes in the flow of the rhythm, the hurried headlong effect produced by a large number of trisyllabic feet with only occasional checks by means of monosyllabic feet or extra accents.

A reading of much good blank verse will accustom the student's ear to the types of variation that bear the most frequent repetition. The commonest of all is undoubtedly the line that begins with direct attack, *e. g.*

Showers on her kings, barbaric pearl and gold.

Twenty per cent of the lines in the last three quotations are of this type. The next most frequently used is the "heroic tetrameter," or if you prefer, the line with a weak medial stress, *e. g.*

To Bona sister to the king of France.

These two types of variation occur constantly in all blank verse from the Earl of Surrey down. The line with a light, or feminine ending,

To be or not to be, that is the question.

is a third variety much used by some poets. It is commonest in dramatic verse, where it is used "in moments of passion and excitement, in questions, in quarrel," and "especially in the light and airy conversation of polite society."[10] In Shakespeare, the frequency of its use—from one line out of sixty-four to about one out of four—has been made a test

[10] Mayor: *Chapters on English Metre*, Ch. XI. *See also* the tables and specimens in Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual*, Part II.

for the chronology of the plays. In modern blank verse it is used but sparingly, but the later Elizabethans were excessively fond of it. Fletcher made it practically his normal line, *e. g.*

> Life is no longer mine, nor dear unto me,
> Than useful to his honor I preserve it.
> If thou hadst studied all the curtesies
> Humanity and noble blood are linkt to,
> Thou couldst not have propounded such a benefit,
> Nor heaped upon me such unlookt for honor
> As dying for his sake, to be his martyr.
> (*Custom of the Country*, IV, i.)

Besides these three common and easily distinguished kinds of variation, a subtle ear will find that lines of two light stresses distributed thus:

> Appointed tŏ conduct him tŏ the light,
> (Shelley: *Alastor*.)

occur often enough to stand out as a definitely recognized type. It is used by Stephen Phillips, for instance, to the extent of becoming a mannerism. The line with a rhythmic ending like,

> With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes,
> (Shelley: *Prometheus*, I.)

which I read with the third foot trisyllabic and fourth monosyllabic:

> With | Asia, | drinking | life from her | loved | eyes,

is a great favorite with Shelley; and William Butler Yeats employs it to an even greater extent. The phrasing,

> Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
> (*Samson Agonistes*.)

though not at all common, is used by Milton frequently enough to be characterized as Miltonic.

The young poet should be careful of overworking any one kind of line and analyze his verse with a view to a more varied revision.

There are certain rhythmic variations from the iambic which are not what may be called in good use with modern poets. Since the Elizabethan period, lines with less than ten syllables are extremely rare.

> When you were as helpless as a worm,
> (Yeats: *Countess Cathleen.*)

has an effect which modern ears might question, though one coming to it fresh from a reading in Marlowe or Shakespeare might not challenge it. A similarly unusual effect is found in the first two feet of the following lines:

> Thea, Thea, Thea, where is Saturn.
> (Keats: *Hyperion.*)

> Queen of Angels and kind saints defend us.
> (Yeats: *Land of Heart's Desire.*)

> Brother Edmund strive not, we are his friends.
> (Marlowe: *Edward II.*)

> Crammed with slaves wincing from whip-handed thieves.
> (T. S. Moore: *Sea is Kind.*)

Lines in which a syllabic deficiency seems to be made up by the interval of silence at the cesura, as in the following from *Macbeth*,

> What should be spoken here, | | where our fate,

and,

> Died every day she lived. | | Fare thee well,

are of a type rare with the Elizabethans and quite out of good use in modern verse. One more rhythm that is completely obsolete is the Fletcherian final stress which hovers between two important syllables in lines with a feminine ending, as,

And she makes all the haste she can: the man's lost.
No lucky fortune to direct me that way.
She was no lawful prize, therefore no bond-woman.
(*Custom of the Country.*)

Before we leave the matter of rhythmic changes, the writer of blank verse should be cautioned against unusual rhythms which arrest the attention without any special reason. Why did Browning phrase the following line so that it is slowed up by extra stresses?

Richer than that gôld snow Jôve rained on Rhodes.
(*Ring and Book*, I.)

Or why clutter up this passage with so many lingual obstructions?

. . . found alive
Spark-like 'mid unearthed slope-side fig tree-roots
That roof old tombs.
(*Ring and Book*, I.)

Mr. T. Sturge Moore's phrasing in the second line following seems to me, again, unnecessarily awkward.

In semblance of a haughty queen of eld
It, despite broad day visible, audible.
(*Sea is Kind.*)

Effects like these, to pass unchallenged, must in some way be appropriately suggestive of the thing said.

One more possible blemish in blank verse is the unintentional introduction of rime or assonance at the ends of lines. The first three of the lines which follow are perfectly rimed; the fourth is in assonance with them; and assonance binds together the fifth and sixth.

Pure as the sea-mist is my love of thee,
And thine is golden as its memory.
Bright Venus be my witness! Thou art she
Whose song has won me from black infamies.

Thou knowst all. But, if thou pitiest
One who because of his unworthiness . . .
(H. V. Sutherland: *Sappho and Phaon.*)

An annoying blemish of this sort may very easily escape the attention of the poet.[11]

We come now to consider the last and one of the most important matters in regard to blank verse—the conflict of the sense phrases with the line structure. What constitutes a cesura, or a run-on line is determined usually in metrical studies merely by the punctuation of the passage as printed. Lines with any kind of grammatical pause are called end-stopped, and lines printed without any are called run-on or enjambed. It is to be noted, however, that there are different degrees of pauses and different degrees of association in the enjambment of lines. For instance, in the following examples from Blake's early verses, phrases are ruthlessly split by the line structure without any regard to the closeness of their familiar grammatical association.

O Thou who passest through our valleys in
Thy strength, curb thy fierce steeds . . .
. . . Beside our springs
Sit down, and in our mossy valleys, on
Some bank beside a river clear, throw thy
Silk draperies off.
(*To Summer.*)

. . . and, while thou drawest the
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy dew.
(*To the Evening Star.*)

This, of course, is carrying enjambment too far; the line structure becomes only apparent to the eye. Enjambment which divides strictly associated words belongs only in dramatic verse—if, indeed, there—in which a colloquial impres-

[11] Milton has admitted a number of rimed couplets in *Paradise Lost*, probably, as Lowell thinks, unintentionally. There is a fine climactic effect, however, in the rimes in the passage I, 185–191.

sion is sought. There are many passages in *Henry VIII*, for example, where extreme enjambment, combined with a free use of light endings inclines the actor to render the lines as merely rhythmical prose. In contrast to enjambment of this sort, may be cited some lines from Milton in which the proportion of run-on lines (fifteen out of eighteen) is unusually large, but which may be easily read without obliterating the line structure.

> Meanwhile the winged heralds, by command
> Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony
> And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
> A solemn council forthwith to be held
> At Pandemonium, the high capital
> Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
> From every band and squared regiment
> By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
> With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
> Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
> And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
> (Though like a covered field, where champions bold
> Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
> Defied the best of Panim chivalry
> To mortal combat, or career with lance),
> Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
> Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
> In spring-time . . .
>
> (*Paradise Lost*, I, pp. 752-769.)

The reader may feel that there are in this quotation varying degrees of separation in the enjambment, and that in his own reading he would prefer to make fewer run-on lines than the printer has indicated. The question then, of just what constitutes a run-on line, and of how many of them there should be, is not to be easily and arbitrarily determined. In general, if we judge merely by the printed punctuation, it appears that Milton's practice in *Paradise Lost* was to make fifty-eight per cent of his lines run over without any punctuation,

twenty-five per cent to pause with merely a comma at the end, and seventeen per cent he made definitely end-stopped.[12] So large a proportion of run-on lines is not usual in blank verse. Milton's practice is a means of gaining variety in long sweeps of a very even rhythm. Modern verse varies more in rhythm, but has fewer run-on lines. Tennyson and Browning made about one line out of three run over. Shelley, however, whose verse has much rhythmical variety, followed Milton in enjambing more than half of his lines. It is worth while to observe the distinction between lines that are merely comma-stopped and those which have more positive pauses at the end. Too great a use of either kind will make for monotony in blank verse. Perhaps a good practice to suggest would be a fairly even distribution of one-third of each kind, run-on, comma-stopped, and full-stopped.

The struggle of phrasing with meter is regulated quite as much by the number and position of the cesuras as by the question of enjambment. The nature of the cesura is also a determining factor in the struggle of phrasing with the rhythmical pattern.

Most poets have preferred the cesura that comes in the middle of the second or third foot of a pentameter (*i. e.*, in a ten-syllable line, after the fourth or sixth syllable), *e. g.*

> As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
> To one who sins, || and deems himself alone
> And all the world asleep, || they swerved and brake.
> (Tennyson: *Coming of Arthur.*)

Swinburne is peculiar in preferring the cesura after the third foot (*i. e.*, after the seventh syllable), *e. g.*

> Would God my heart were greater; but God wot.
> (*Chastelard.*)

Pauses after the first syllable of a line and just before the last are least used by English poets. The interruption which

[12] These figures are from E. P. Morton's tables, *Technique of English Non-Dramatic Blank Verse* (diss.) 1910.

these cesuras make in the rhythmic continuity is very obtrusive. The pause after the first syllable is especially conspicuous if the word thus set off is phrased with the preceding line, as in Milton's

> The Ionian gods—of Javan's issue held
> Gods, || yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth.
> (*Paradise Lost*, I, 509.)

Compare with this the slighter disturbance in the rhythm of the following pair of lines,

> Contending, and removed his tents far off;
> Then, || from the mountain hewing timber tall.
> (*Ibid.*, XI, 728.)

When the rhythm of a passage is broken by many short phrases, pauses after the first and before the last syllable do not much trouble the scansion; *e. g.*

> "O King," she cried, "and I will tell thee: few,
> Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him."
> (Tennyson: *Coming of Arthur.*)

How the position of the cesura varies from line to line may be observed by studying the three long extracts quoted earlier in the chapter as illustrations of different types of rhythmic change from the regular iambic—or still better, by reading several pages at random from Milton or Tennyson. This phase of the study involves the personal judgment of the reader, for no two of us would agree exactly on where to make pauses that are too slight to be marked by punctuation. The musician has the advantage of the poet here; he may indicate his varying degrees of pause with some subtlety, while the poet has merely the choice of putting in or leaving out a comma.

A study of the punctuation of the best blank verse shows that the full stops come more often near the middle of the lines than toward the end; that the position of all the pauses

changes constantly from time to time (except where a repetition brings emphasis);[13] that the closer the verse keeps to the iambic rhythm the more frequent are the pauses;[14] and that the kind of pause—whether masculine or feminine—is subject to variation.[15]

The question of how much to break the rhythm with internal pauses is determined by the character of the blank verse. The more colloquial or dramatic it is, the more will it be interrupted by cesuras. The meditations of Browning's Caliban or Milton's Satan are broken by four or five times as many pauses as the smooth eloquence of Henry V or of Swinburne's John Knox.[16]

This classification and discussion of the effects possible in blank verse seems a wooden treatment of the most flexible and most subtle of English forms. But any analysis

---

[13] *E. g.*,

Fainter by day, but always in the night,
Blood-red, and sliding down in the blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red.

(Tennyson: *Holy Grail*).

[14] *Cf.* the passage quoted from Tennyson on p. 208 with that from Noyes on p. 211.

[15] The difference in the effect of masculine and feminine cesuras is not so significant in iambic verse as in trochaic. Iambic movement is stable enough to resist the slight trochaic impulse given by a pause before a stressed syllable. Compare the effect of the two kinds of cesuras in both iambic and trochaic pentameter:

"I yield it just," || said Adam, "and submit." (Masculine in iambic.)
"Their Maker's image," || answered Michael, "then." (Feminine in iambic.)

(*Paradise Lost*, XI, 526 and 515.)

Wrote one song— || and in my brain I sing it. (Masculine in trochaic.)
Says the poet— || "Then I stopped my painting." (Feminine in trochaic.)

(*One Word More*, 200 and 49.)

[16] *Cf. Paradise Lost*, IV, 105-113 with *Henry V*, III, i, or *Bothwell*.

of technique is, I fear, open to that charge. The student of poetry who cares to read critically must form some quite definite basis for his analysis, then familiarize himself so perfectly with his scheme of approach that this purely intellectual understanding of technique may not interfere with his emotional æsthetic appreciation. Similarly, the young verse writer may be repelled or frightened—according to his degree of assurance or of humility—by all this talk of enjambment, of cesuras, of failing stresses and the like. But this discussion of technique is intended, for him, merely as a basis for revision and correction and self-criticism. Poets must write by ear, not by rule. However, an analytic reading of models and a habit of intelligent self-criticism may do much to tune one's ear.

CHAPTER XIII

Sonnet

The sonnet is the most difficult of all the well-known lyric forms. The exigencies of the rime scheme hamper the originality of the poet, and the limitation as to length often forces the unskillful to pad or pare an ill-fitting thought. These difficulties have been responsible for so much poor verse that many readers look askance at the form. In the hands of poets with skill in technique, however, the sonnet has given exquisite pleasure to the reader appreciative of the subtler phases of poetry.

The sonnet is an Old Provencal form, perfected and made popular by Petrarch, in the great sequence addressed to his perhaps mythical Laura. Sonneteering raged in Italy through the fifteenth century and spread to France, Spain, Portugal, and England in the sixteenth. In English literature the sonnet has taken two forms, the Italian, or true sonnet, and the Elizabethan adaptation.

As Rossetti is our greatest master of the Italian form, one of his will best serve as a model:

> When do I see thee most, beloved one?
> When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
> Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
> The worship of that love through thee made known?
> Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone)
> Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
> Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
> And my soul only sees thy soul its own?
>
> O love, my love! if I no more should see
> Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
> Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—

How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?
(*House of Life*, IV.)

This type of sonnet consists of fourteen iambic pentameter lines, the first eight, called the *octave*, always rimed *abba abba*, and the last six, the *sestet*, with three rimes variously arranged. The sestet of the above sonnet is rimed *ccdeed*, but almost every other possible combination, except three couplets, may be used. The following sestets are used by the greatest English sonneteers, in this order of frequency:[1]

c d e c d e	*c c d e e d*
c d c d e e	*c d e e c d*
c d d c e e	*c d e e d c*
c d e d c e	*c d d e c e*
c d c e d e	*c d e d e c*
c d e c e d	*c d c e e d*

The type of sestet that ends in a couplet is very unusual in Italian poetry, and many English writers on the sonnet have arbitrarily decided against it. It is to be found, however, in the work of most of our best sonneteers.

Another form of sestet, almost as popular with the great Italian sonnet writers as that just mentioned, has two rimes instead of three, *e. g.*

Sometimes thou seem'st not as thyself alone,
But as the meaning of all things that are;
A breathless wonder, shadowing forth afar
Some heavenly solstice hushed and halcyon;
Whose unstirred lips are music's visible tone;
Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul unbar,
Being of its furthest fires oracular—
The evident heart of all life sown and mown.

[1] This list is taken from the table of sonnet forms compiled by Professor L. T. Weeks (*Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 25, p. 179), based on an examination of 6,283 sonnets.

Even such love is; and is not thy name Love?
Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends apart
All gathering clouds of Night's ambiguous art;
Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes above;
And simply, as some gage of flower or glove,
Stakes with a smile the world against thy heart!
(Rossetti: *House of Life*, XXVII.)

This form of sestet is much used by Wordsworth, Rossetti, Mrs. Browning, and Swinburne. Keats and Arnold also wrote a few sonnets of this kind. It may take the following rime schemes:

c d c d c d[2]	*c d c d d c*
c d d c c d	*c d c c d d*
c d d c d c	*c d c c d c*

Wordsworth was fond of one other variation, the introduction of a new rime in the sixth and seventh lines of the octave, *e. g.*

Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee:
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.
(*On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic.*)

Though a number of other individual variations from the strict type may be found, none but these two have gone

[2] According to Professor Weeks this form of sestet is used even more frequently in English sonnets than any of those with three rimes.

beyond the stage of rare experiments. Fourteen line poems such as Shelley's *Ozymandias* may not strictly be called sonnets.

The three sonnets quoted so far have other characteristics in common besides a similarity of rime scheme. A good sonnet should have its thought structure expressed in periodic form; the last line should be a climax. Very often it is composed first. There should be some sort of break in the flow of thought at the beginning of the sestet, and a slighter one at the fifth line of the octave. The theme of the perfect sonnet rises and develops in the octave and falls to a close in the sestet. As the rime scheme is a little difficult to follow, the lines should not run over very much. The iambic rhythm need not be varied greatly; unusual rhythmic changes distract the attention from the structure of the whole.

Wordsworth, whom we have seen made some change in the strict form, liked the effect of tying the octave and sestet together by having the break in thought occur in the middle of the ninth line, instead of at the end of the eighth, as it does in the sonnets already quoted. An example of Wordsworth's use in this respect, is the famous sonnet on the sonnet:

> Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
> And hermits are contented with their cells;
> And students with their pensive citadels;
> Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
> Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
> High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
> Will murmur by the hour in foxglove cells:
> In truth the prison, unto which we doom
> Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me
> In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
> Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
> Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
> Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
> Should find my solace there as I have found.

Milton, in his sonnet *On His Blindness*, has gained an unusual effect by phrasing in such a way that the rime structure is obscured. The break in the thought occurs in the middle of the eighth line.

> When I consider how my life is spent
> Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
> And that one talent which is death to hide
> Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
> To serve therewith my Maker and present
> My true account, lest he returning chide;
> "Doth God exact day-labor light denied?"
> I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
> That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
> Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
> Is kingly: Thousands at his bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
> They also serve who only stand and wait."

The writer of sonnets should remember that all these variations from the norm given at the beginning of the chapter are for the purpose of æsthetic effects, and are deliberately introduced by the poets. They are not cases of poets modifying a form they could not handle successfully. The student who essays a sonnet should not feel that he is at liberty to depart from the standard because he finds rimes elusive. He had better try something easier than writing sonnets. "No Procrustes has obliged you to be lopped to the measure of this bed: Parnassus will not be in ruins if you should not publish a sonnet."

The Italian sonnet was introduced into England by Sir Thomas Wyatt. The Earl of Surrey, whose name is always associated with his, devised the modification which became enormously popular with the Elizabethans. The best sonnet sequences (collections of sonnets on related themes) of this type are those of Shakespeare, Sidney, Constable and

Daniel. The form is still much used, but is not so popular with modern poets as the Italian.

The *Elizabethan sonnet* consists of three iambic pentameter quatrains terminating in a heroic couplet, *e. g.*

> When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past,
> I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
> And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;
> Then can I drown an eye unused to flow,
> For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
> And weep afresh love's long-since-cancell'd woe,
> And moan the expense of many a vanished sight.
> Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
> And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
> The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
> Which I new pay as if not paid before:
> —But if the while I think on thee, dear Friend,
> All losses are restored and sorrows end.
>
> (Shakespeare: *Sonnet* XXX.)

In this type of sonnet, the quatrains should each express a parallel phase of thought, leading to a strongly expressed conclusion in the couplet. The special emphasis of a couplet coming after the ear is accustomed to the alteration of quatrains, gives an opportunity for a very marked climax. This is the great advantage of the Elizabethan type.

The only recognized variations of this type are Sidney's riming the second quatrain on the same sounds as the first (*abab, abab, cdcd, ee*) and Spenser's linking the three quatrains together thus: *abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee,* for example:

> What guile is this, that those her golden tresses
> She doth attire under a net of gold,
> And with sly skill so cunningly them dresses
> That which is gold or hair may scarce be told?
> Is it that men's frail eyes, which gaze too bold,
> She may entangle in that golden snare,
> And, being caught, may craftily enfold
> Their weaker hearts, which are not well aware?

Take heed, therefore, mine eyes, how ye do stare
Henceforth too rashly on that gilded net,
In which if ever ye entrapped are,
Out of her bands ye by no means shall get.
Fondness it were for any, being free,
To covet fetters, though they golden be.
(Spenser: *Amoretti*, XXXVII.)

These two variations have rarely been tried by modern poets. Keats in his second sonnet on *Fame* (*"How Fevered is the Man who cannot look"*) has attempted a combination of the Elizabethan with the Italian form, by adding to two quatrains one of the Italian sestets. His rime scheme is *abab, cdcd, efeggf*. Many ears would be annoyed by the interruption of eleven lines of alternate rimes by the unexpected sound *g*, introduced before satisfying *f*. But perhaps the fact that this seems to be a unique experiment is the best argument against imitating it.

When one compares the relative advantages of the two forms of sonnet, the easier rime scheme of the Elizabethan at once suggests itself. To this may be added the emphasis, already mentioned, of the couplet coming after quatrains. On the other hand, the poet more rarely finds an idea that is perfectly fitted to the Elizabethan form; the necessity of a parallel structure in the three quatrains may lead him to pad the thought.

In general, the sonnet is the medium for reflective and interpretative poetry, rather than for simple descriptive themes. It is best for the personally intimate and subtle thought of a moment, a theme that needs no long development. This may take the form of an elaborate metaphor, or it may be a general truth of life drawn from some moment in individual experience. The best appreciation of the sonnet as a vehicle of poetic thought is Rossetti's own:[3]

[3] William Sharp's *Sonnets of this Century* is a very well selected collection, and his introductory essay on the sonnet will be found most interesting and very useful to the student of this form.

SONNET

A sonnet is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fullness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.

A sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The Soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due:—
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

(*The Sonnet.*)

CHAPTER XIV

Ode

An ode is a longer lyric with some development of its theme. The term is applied properly to a poem written in a fervid exalted strain. There have been poems called odes, of course, that do not meet these requirements; Joseph Warton's *Ode on Shooting* and Fergusson's *Ode to the Bee* are on themes as lacking in dignity as Gray's amusing *Ode to a Favorite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes*. But seriousness and elevation in subject-matter are generally characteristic of this rather vague type of poem. Furthermore, there are distinguished poems in the language not called odes by their authors, but certainly worthy of being included in this category. Such are Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, Coleridge's *Hymn before Sunrise*, and Shelley's *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. Certain great poems like *Lycidas*, *Adonais*, and *In Memoriam*, though they have length, development and dignity, are more properly elegies[1] than odes, but Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of The Duke of Wellington*, because of its encomiastic character, is properly included among the great odes.

From these remarks it becomes evident that the propriety of terming a poem an ode is a question of content rather than of form. To go further into the matter is, therefore, outside the province of this book; we have merely to point out the verse forms that have been associated with the ode, though all but one of these forms have been used as well for other

[1] No special chapter of the book has been devoted to dirges and elegies because no particular forms have become exclusively associated with poems of this class. The elegiac quatrain and the *In Memoriam* stanza are exemplified in Chapter IX.

types of lyrics. A classification of odes from the point of view of form may divide them into three groups,—regular stanzaic, called Sapphic, or Horatian odes; regular strophic or Pindaric odes; and irregular Pindaric or free odes.

As these names imply, the ode is of classical origin.[2] It was cultivated extensively in Italy and France in the later Renaissance period and introduced into England by Spenser. His *Epithalamium* is our first English ode. His example was followed by Ben Jonson and the seventeenth century lyrists, Milton, Herrick, Randolph, and Marvell. The odes of these poets are of the type called Horatian, but except in Jonson's satiric ode *To Himself* on the failure of his *New Inn* they have nothing in common with Horace's odes, or *Carmina*, except that they are written in a regular stanza form. The stanzas are of the types much used in the seventeenth century —tail-rimed stanzas composed of variously arranged long and short lines. In the latter part of the century, Cowley introduced the irregular Pindaric. He had during the Interregnum, chanced upon a copy of the odes of Pindar printed without any distinction of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, the characteristic divisions of the form. As Cowley had not sufficient knowledge of Pindar's meters to discover that these poems have the most exact strophic correspondences, he thought the lines varied irregularly without any definite scheme, and paraphrased and imitated Pindar according to this lawless principle. "His idea of an ode, which he impressed with such success upon the British nation that it has never been entirely removed, was of a lofty and tempestuous piece of indefinite poetry conducted without sail or oar in whatever direction the enthusiasm of the poet chose to take it."[3] This formless form introduced through a misapprehension, at once became fashionable and has ever since remained as a recognized type of English verse.

[2] For more detail on the history of the ode *see* Edmund Gosse's introduction to his collection, *English Odes*, Lond., 1889.

[3] Edmund Gosse.

The later seventeenth century turned out irregular Pindarics in great numbers, but none except those of Cowley himself and Dryden are in any sense contributions to English poetry. Dryden's great odes, *Alexander's Feast* and *St. Cecilia's Day*, are among the few English odes written to be sung by a chorus on public occasions, as was usually the case with poems of this class among the Greeks.

The true Pindaric ode had been tried by Jonson in his *Ode to the Memory of Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison*, but he had no imitators. To Congreve belongs the credit of having reintroduced the Pindaric form, but there was no interest shown in the type for fifty years, until Gray wrote his *Progress of Poesy* and the *Bard* in correct Pindarics. Later, Collins and Akenside followed Gray's example. The romantics of the early nineteenth century found the two other forms of the ode better suited to their genius, and with a very few exceptions, strict Pindarics were neglected again until Swinburne wrote several of them, notably his *Birthday Ode for the Anniversary Festival of Victor Hugo*. Since the time of Gray, all three types of ode have continued to be written. Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Swinburne have all contributed distinguished examples to our literature. Lowell in his *Commemoration Ode* has given us the greatest ode written this side of the Atlantic. Other American poets to use the form with praiseworthy ability are Sidney Lanier and William Vaughn Moody.

The relative merits of the three ode forms are easy to see. The regular Pindaric with its strict elaborate structure and widely separated correspondences, has the severe symmetry of classical architecture. This is suitable for a theme like the *Progress of Poesy*, which can be divided into stages of development which fit evenly into the formal strophic divisions. In this rigid limitation in subject matter the Pindaric form is like that of the ideal sonnet. The Horatian form, with its free variation as to stanza type and number of stanzas, is more suitable for most themes, besides being

much easier to handle. The irregular or free ode is far from being as easy as it looks, for the changes in structure from line to line and stanza to stanza should not be haphazard, but should come in response to the thought changes of the developing theme. The advantage this type has over the other two is that the stanzas may be made long or short as the thought dictates; there need be no temptation toward padded, discursive thought, the besetting sin of ode writers. On the other hand, this unbridling of Pegasus may carry the undisciplined poet into what he feels is lyric enthusiasm, but is in reality the tenuous region of wordy vacuity. The ode has always been a rhetorical form, and the line between good and bad rhetoric can only be determined by experience and disciplined taste. Perhaps the best advice to the aspiring singer is not to write an ode if he can help it. However, if he cannot, here are a few examples of ways in which it has been done successfully.

Stanzaic Odes.—Horatian and Sapphic are terms usually applied vaguely to any kind of stanzaic ode, the classification being based on form rather than subject. The earliest and one of the greatest stanzaic odes in English is the *Epithalamium* which Spenser wrote for his own wedding-day, June 11, 1594. The first of its twenty-three stanzas follows:

> Ye learned sister, which have often times
> Been to the aiding others to adorn,
> Whom ye thought worthy of your graceful rimes,
> That even the greatest did not greatly scorn
> To hear their names sung in your simple lays,
> But joyed in their praise;
> And when ye list your own mishaps to mourn,
> Which death, or love, or fortune's wreck did raise,
> Your string could soon to sadder tenor turn,
> And teach the woods and waters to lament
> Your doleful dreariment:
> Now lay these sorrowful complaints aside;

And having all your heads with garlands crowned,
Help me my own love's praises to resound;
Ne let the same of any be envied:
So Orpheus did for his own bride,
So I unto myself alone will sing;
The woods shall to me answer, and my echo ring.

The stanzas, except the last, contain either eighteen or nineteen lines, the former type rimed as in the one just quoted, *ababccbcbddeffeegg*, and the latter with an additional rime worked in near the end. The basic meter is pentameter varied usually by three trimeters and a final hexameter. Though the stanzas are not exactly alike in this respect—the one quoted, for instance, containing a tetrameter—they all, except the last, end with a hexameter refrain line. This use of the alexandrine which relates the *Epithalamium* stanza to the Spenserian, has been much followed by subsequent poets in the construction of their ode stanzas. Shelley's *Ode to Liberty* is in general modeled after the *Epithalamium*. It has nineteen stanzas of fifteen lines each, with the rimes arranged, *ababcdddcecedee*. The pentameter is interrupted by tetrameters and an alexandrine, and another alexandrine concludes each stanza. The odes of Keats are none of them so long as this, but they are all, except the *Ode to Psyche*, formed of ten or eleven line stanzas of pentameter with interwoven rimes. The *Ode to a Nightingale* has eight stanzas rimed *ababcdecde;* the eighth line is always a trimeter:

My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains
  My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains,
  One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
  But being too happy in thy Happiness,—
    That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
      In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
  Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

In his other well-known odes, *To a Grecian Urn*, *To Autumn*, and *To Melancholy*, Keats made slight changes in the order in which he satisfied the rimes toward the ends of some of his stanzas. In this he was perhaps following the example of Spenser who, as we have seen, did not make all his stanzas exactly correspond. The first stanza of the *Grecian Urn* rimes *ababcdedce*, and the second, *ababcdeced*. One wonders whether there is anything gained by thus slightly disappointing the ear of the reader?

Coleridge's *Ode to Tranquillity* is of a different type. The four stanzas have six lines of tetrameter followed by a pentameter and end in an alexandrine:

> Tranquillity! Thou better name
> Than all the family of fame!
> Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
> To low intrigue, or factious rage;
> For oh! Dear child of thoughtful truth,
> To thee I gave my early youth,
> And left the bark, and blest the Steadfast shore,
> Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

One of the finest examples of stanzas of varying meters is Milton's splendid *Nativity Hymn*. This is made up of eight lines of trimeter, pentameter, tetrameter, and a final alexandrine. The rime runs *aabccbdd*, for example:

> Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
> Once bless our human ears
> If ye have power to touch our senses so,
> And let your silver chime
> Move in melodious time;
> And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
> And with your ninefold harmony,
> Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

Shelley's *Skylark* has stanzas of four lines of trimeter—normally trochaic—concluding with an alexandrine: (*ababb*)

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

An even simpler stanza is that used by Marvell in his *Horatian Ode* upon *Cromwell's Return from Ireland.*

The forward youth that would appear,
Must now forsake his Muses dear,
Nor in the Shadows sing
His numbers languishing.

And Cowper's *Boadicea* is composed merely of trochaic tetrameter quatrains.

Collins's much admired *Ode to Evening* is made up of unrimed four line stanzas:[4]

If ought of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales.

O nymph reserv'd, while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* is also unique among Odes in its form. It is made up of five fourteen-line sections, each section written in *terza rima* with a concluding couplet.

Evidently then, stanzaic odes may be written in almost any form that pleases the poet. Swinburne has exercised his liberty in this respect, and among his dozen or so odes may be found some extremely interesting examples in the long measures, triple rhythms, and difficult rime schemes of which he is so great a master. The student of the form

[4] For an elaborate discussion of this and other odes of Collins's *see* W. C. Bronson's Edition of Collins in the "Athenæum Press Series."

should not neglect the odes to *March*, to *England*, to *Eton*, and the birthday and New-Year odes to Victor Hugo.

Regular Pindaric Odes.—The distinguishing characteristic of the regular Pindaric form is the threefold division into strophe, antistrophe and epode. These represent the choral divisions of the Greek odes on which the English were modeled. Pindar's odes were sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, or lyre and flute, with some sort of dignified dance; during the singing of the strophe the chorus moved across the hall or temple, moved back during the antistrophe, and stood still at the epode. The strophe and antistrophe correspond in form, but the epode differs from them. The forms for these divisions may be constructed, at the will of the poet, of any number of lines, and in English odes, in any meter or combination of meters. No two of Pindar's have the same metrical scheme. His strophes are made up of from four to sixteen lines, combining various short and long meters. The English Poets have carefully rimed their Pindaric strophes, but usually in a simpler way than the complicated interweaving of the stanzaic odes of Keats. Ordinarily Pindaric odes are long enough to repeat the arrangement of strophe, antistrophe, and epode several times, thus dividing the poem into a number of grand divisions. Pindar has an ode of thirteen of these divisions. Gray's odes have but three. Each time the strophic arrangement is repeated it is in exact correspondence with the first. The larger strophic groups correspond to the general divisions of thought in the progressively developing theme, but poets have rarely attempted to make a threefold subdivision of each part to correspond to the division into strophe, antistrophe, and epode.

The regular Pindaric is somewhat rare in English, though two or three of them happen to be very well known. Probably one reason that they have not been more practiced is that the labor expended in their composition seems useless, for the strophic correspondences are so far apart that the

reader can perceive them only after a close analysis. The appreciation of the structure of Gray's *Bard* in which the metrical scheme repeats itself after an interval of forty-eight lines, is an intellectual rather than an æsthetic pleasure. Gray himself said that the strophic divisions should not be longer than nine lines each, but he did not follow out his own principle. The Greek audiences at the celebrations at which Pindar's odes were sung, had the advantage over the reader of these English imitations in that the repetition of the accompaniment and the movements of the chorus made the structure easy to follow. Thus the strict Pindaric when introduced into English becomes an exotic which cannot be acclimatized.

There is scarcely room to quote a whole Pindaric as an example. Here are the concluding strophe, antistrophe, and epode of Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, the most perfect of its type in English.

III. 1

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's[5] Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
To Him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face: The dauntless Child
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled.
This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.

III. 2

Nor second He,[6] that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He pass'd the flaming bound of Place and Time:

[5] Shakespeare. [6] Milton.

The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw, but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two Coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder cloth'd, and long-resounding pace.

III. 3

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictur'd urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more—
Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the Sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

Gray's other Pindaric, the *Bard*, is romantic in theme, but quite as severely perfect in structure. Its strophic divisions are longer than those just quoted. Collins placed the epodes of his regular Pindaric odes between the strophe and the antistrophe, but what the advantage may be is hardly apparent. He rimed his epodes, which are longer than Gray's, in couplets or quatrains. His short ode *To Mercy* has no epode; this is a peculiarity of the three brief processional odes of Pindar. Shelley understood the Pindaric form so imperfectly that his *Ode to Naples* begins with two epodes; then come two strophes, four antistrophes, and two

concluding epodes. These parts he arranged with correspondences among themselves, but those between the opening and the concluding epodes are more than a hundred lines apart. Swinburne's *Ode on The Proclamation of The French Republic* begins with six difficult rimed strophes, no two with the same structure, followed by six exactly corresponding antistrophes, and ends with a long epode. His *Athens, an Ode* contains a hundred lines of heptameter, hexameter, and octameter, all in trochaic movement. These two odes are the longest and most elaborately wrought regular Pindarics in English.

Irregular Odes.—The Cowleian Pindaric, or free ode, has been used by many second-rate poets as a wholly formless type that soars vaguely on, each line length and rime varying constantly with the poet's whim. The greatest examples, however, are far from shapeless. The rimes alternate or run in couplets for short stretches; tail-rimes occur where they may reinforce an emphatic sentence ending; the majority of the lines are likely to be in one basic meter, usually pentameter, and the other meters are felt as variants. The variation in meter should coincide usually with the phrases of the thought; that is, these odes have very few run-on lines. If the lines are not made distinct by the phrasing and the rime scheme, if floating lines without corresponding rimes are permitted very often, the ear cannot grasp any impression of structure, and the ode will sound like blank verse that occasionally falls into free verse.

The stanzas, which may, of course, be of any length, should be thought-paragraphs which may be led to a climax by reiterated rime and by a last line which is longer or shorter than the preceding lines. We have already seen the frequency with which stanzas in the two other forms of the ode end in alexandrines. A change in the movement of the verse through a single stanza may be a means of emphasizing some new aspect of the theme.

Evidently the principles underlying the free ode cannot

be very fixed; therefore criticism can have no firmer basis than individual taste. The result is that there is more difference of opinion as to the merits of the free odes than of any other class of poems in our literature. Not even the greatest of them have escaped censure from some critic of recognized judgment and taste.

Some poets have used the freedom permitted to them in the ode with much restraint. They have written odes in one consistent meter throughout, and merely varied the rime scheme and the length of the stanza. Collins, who wrote odes of all three general types, has one to *Manners* that is written wholly in tetrameter couplets. Campbell's *To Winter* is in tetrameter, rimed now in couplets and now in quatrains. And Byron's *On Venice* uses pentameters divided into long stanzas of varying length with interwoven rimes. The best known free odes, however, do not approach so closely any single fixed form.

Dryden's *For St. Cecilia's Day* attempts to suggest by changes in rhythm and meter the different musical instruments alluded to in different stanzas. Except for the galloping anapests of "The trumpet's loud clangor" there is, of course, no special appropriateness, but the changes give each new thought a distinctive character. Dryden's *Alexander's Feast or The Power of Music* is written on the same principle. The phrasing in both these celebrated odes keeps the line structure very clearly defined. Tetrameter rather than pentameter seems to be the basic meter. The rhetorical character of their swelling refrains and rather obvious music is appropriate to their original purpose, a public choral rendition.

Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* is generally conceded to be the greatest of English odes. In this, better than in any other, one may study the principle of the thought creating the form, rather than yielding to a preconceived form. Here are a few stanzas of which this is especially true:

I

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth,
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III

Now while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay:
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd-boy.

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

In these stanzas, the phrases correspond to the lines of the verse except where a complete phrase would make a line longer than a pentameter. Lines longer than pentameters are permitted to come only at the conclusion of a stanza (*e. g.*, stanzas I, II, III, IX). The pentameter is felt as the line from which the other meters vary. The famous fifth stanza is exceptionally fine in the effective alternation of meters in perfect correspondence to the thought. It should be noted,

too, that the rimes always come on emphatic words. The riming of the sixth stanza is striking in its climactic arrangement; the riming words of the last two lines satisfy sounds that have held the ear in suspense for, respectively, six and four whole lines. Two marked changes in movement occur in the irregularity of the fourth stanza which occasionally runs into triple rhythm; and in the distinct trochaic character of the tenth which adds a lightness appropriate to the happy thought—compensation for the loss which the nine preceding stanzas have discussed.

Another of the great odes of the century, Tennyson's *On the Death of The Duke of Wellington*, has not the frequent change in meter and rime of Wordsworth's. The constant use of the same rime for three successive lines gives the insistent emphasis of a tolling bell. The dirge-like effect is most marked in the fifth stanza by using such riming sounds as, *toll'd, mold, gold, bold, fold, knoll'd, roll'd, old; boom, doom, claim, name, blame, same, frame; long, song.* The trochaic and iambic movements are constantly mixed through the poem.

Choric Odes.—One more type of ode, related in its free structure to that just discussed, is the ode imitated from the choric passages of the Greek dramatists. The choruses in Milton's *Samson Agonistes* are the greatest examples of this type in English. They have been among the most admired of Milton's achievements in verse. They are composed in meters that vary from line to line; stretches of trimeter or tetrameter are interspersed with pentameters and, more rarely, hexameters. The rhythm is duple, but with a freedom that admits trisyllabic feet more often than is Milton's practice elsewhere. Occasional rimes are introduced both for ornament and for a sense of structure. Here is a passage near the end of the poem:

> But he, though blind of sight,
> Despised, and thought extinguished quite,
> With inward eyes illuminated,

His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perched roosts,
And nests in order ranged,
Of tame villatic fowl, but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So Virtue, given for lost,
Depressed and overthrown as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teemed,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed;
And, though her body die, her fame survives,
A secular bird, ages of lives.

Shelley introduced choric odes in his *Prometheus Unbound.* These philosophic lyrics sung by the choruses of hours and spirits have a more crystallized form than the Miltonic free ode. Shelley preferred to keep a regular rhythm in each ode and a definite stanza and rime scheme. The wonderful choruses of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* are also stanzaic odes, not in the free rhythms of the Greek dramatists.

Finally, there are a number of lyrics written on the principle of the irregular short choric ode, but not long enough to be properly called odes. Milton has given us examples of this sort in his short poems *On Time* and *At a Solemn Music.* Matthew Arnold's *Strayed Reveller* is a lyric dialogue written probably with a consciousness of the Miltonic and Shelleyian developments of the Greek choric ode. It is perhaps better classified as *vers libre.* Here are the two concluding stanzas:

Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah glimmering water—
Fitful earth-murmur—
Dreaming woods!

Ah, golden-hair'd strangely smiling Goddess,
And Thou, prov'd much enduring,
Wave-toss'd Wanderer!
Who can stand still?
Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me.
The cup again!
Faster, faster,
O Circe Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

Of the same general type are the short irregular odes of Coventry Patmore. He and Matthew Arnold are really the forerunners of the present school of free-verse writers.

CHAPTER XV

French Forms

During the last three or four decades a number of artificial French verse forms have been naturalized by English and American poets. Those that have secured a definite place in our poetry are the ballade, the rondel, the rondeau, the triolet, the villanelle, and the sestina. Most of these forms had their origin in medieval Provence and were extensively practiced by the French poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Chaucer, Gower, and their immediate successors tried to develop one or two of them in English, but even at that period of the language, when the laws of rime were similar to those of French, these exotics scarcely flourished. There were also isolated attempts at their use by Sidney, Drummond, Charles Cotton, and a certain obscure Patrick Carey, but these are merely rare curiosities. It should be added that the popularity of a late eighteenth century political satire came near to introducing the rondeau almost a hundred years before the decade in which it actually became a much used form.

In the seventies a group of young poets, Andrew Lang, W. E. Henley, Edmund Gosse, and Austin Dobson, more or less independently began experimenting with all these artificial French forms. They were led to them not only by a sense of style characteristic of the decade, but also, doubtless, by a common interest in French poetry, which, under the leadership of Theodore De Banville, was reviving with much charm and grace the practice of these older forms. In 1872 appeared Andrew Lang's *Lays and Lyrics of Old France.* Five years later, Mr. Gosse wrote an article for the *Cornhill Magazine* (July, 1877), "A Plea for Certain

Exotic Forms of Verse," and this was followed by Austin Dobson's "Note on Some Foreign Forms of Verse," appended to W. D. Adams' anthology, *Latter Day Lyrics* (1878). By 1888 the French forms had been given such a place by contemporary verse-writers that Gleeson White published a fine collection of these forms called *Ballades and Rondeaus*, with an introductory essay on the history of each type. Among the authors represented in the volume are, besides the four already mentioned, Swinburne, Robert Bridges, William Sharp, Arthur Symons, Richard Le Gallienne, John Payne, Brander Matthews, Clinton Scollard, and H. C. Bunner.

These forms originated at a period when a preference for style in literature was paramount, and have been popular only during such periods. Some of them are mere exercises in ingenuity rather than vehicles for thought. They are all of them difficult to do well, but the peculiar qualities they require pique one to attempt them. Most of them are suited chiefly for witty and satiric themes and for society verse, where lightness, grace, and elegance of form are desired. They should have the graceful correctness of drawing-room manners, where art plays about arbitrary forms, felicitously avoiding the stiffness of too apparent restraint. Many of these forms present no greater difficulties than the sonnet, but as yet no very great poem has been written in them in English. We admire ballades and rondeaus for the skill and grace which they display, but do not expect in them any revelation of deep poetic feeling. Mr. Austin Dobson, who handles them with an exquisite facility, has said of the forms: "What is moderately advanced for some of them (by the present writer at least), is that they may add a new charm of buoyancy—a lyric freshness—to amatory and familiar verse already too much condemned to faded measures and outworn cadences. Further, upon assumption that merely graceful or tuneful trifles may sometimes be written (and even read), that they are admir-

able vehicles for the expression of trifles or *jeux d'esprit.*"[1]

The two general difficulties in writing verses of these types lie in the unusual number of rimes they require and in the peculiar use of the refrain, a feature common to them all. Before essaying one of these poetic trifles the student of verse should read over the principles of English rime in Chapter VI and compare them with the practice of some French poet. He will see that a villanelle or a chant royal is no trifle when written in English. In English there are not only fewer rimes than in French, but words like *reed: read*, and *fate: fête* are not allowable as rimes in English, nor will *wake: awake: rewake* do, as they might in French. If the poet capitulates to the difficulties of his form and admits identical sounds he should conceal his fault by separating such words as far as possible in the poem. The point about the use of the refrain is that it should be brought in each time with a subtle skill that makes its recurrence seem inevitable. And not only that; it is an added grace to give the refrain a slightly different meaning by some change in punctuation (the words remaining unchanged) each time it is introduced.

Before going on to explain the special types of these forms it may be well to advise the student against introducing variations of his own in the rime scheme or stanza form. The types have become fixed; if you don't like them or cannot conform to them as they are, let them alone. Make use of forms that suit you better, but do not compromise by writing a poem which just falls short of being a ballade or a villanelle. "This is an example of that vague 'poetical license' which incompetent workmen are so fond of falling back upon, and which in reality does not exist. If a sculptor sets himself to carve a face out of marble there is no sculpturesque license that permits him to stick on a plaster nose because he finds it too difficult to chisel the marble outline, or because he has carelessly cut too deep into the substance.

[1] Preface to *Latter Day Lyrics*, ed. W. D. Adams, Lond., 1878.

It is only in poetry that persons without an instinct for form are allowed to play tricks of this kind, and it cannot be too distinctly said that they are not allowed to do this except by the licentious laws of their own making."[2]

The Ballade.—The ballade in the course of its history has varied much in structure, but there are only two generally recognized types in use today. One is composed of three eight-line stanzas followed by a four-line envoy, all on three rimes; the other, of three ten-line stanzas followed by a five-line envoy—all on four rimes. Each stanza of the eight-line type is rimed *ababbcbc,* and the envoy, *bcbc.* The refrain is the last line of the first stanza repeated as the last line of the other two stanzas and of the envoy. No deviation from this scheme is permissible in the best usage. The recognized scheme for the ten-line type is *ababbccdcd* for the stanza and *ccdcd* for the envoy. Two other schemes that have been used, though rarely, for ten-line stanzas are *ababbcdccd* and *abaabccdcd.* Henley tried one or two experiments with the rime scheme but they have not been imitated.

The ballade is written oftenest in the iambic or the anapestic movement, but the trochaic, the dactylic and the mixed movements are also employed for it. Tetrameter is the commonest meter for the eight-line ballade and pentameter for the ten-line, but the poets have observed no strict rule in this matter. Ballades in trimeter and even dimeter are not unusual, and Swinburne was fond of writing them in hexameter. The envoy, following a medieval convention, is addressed to some great person—lady, prince, queen. Andrew Lang has one addressed to Satan.

Most English ballades are written on light and delicate themes, or, very often satiric and comic. François Villon, however, the famous "poet, housebreaker, and thief," used the ballade for his bitter complaints on the life of the poor,

[2] E. W. Gosse: "A Plea for Certain Exotic Forms of Verse." *Cornhill Magazine,* vol. 36, p. 71 (1877).

as well as for his religious themes. His one truly great poem, the *Ballade of Dead Ladies*, made very familiar through Rossetti's famous translation,[3] set the fashion of writing ballades on the theme of *sic transit gloria mundi*. Fine examples of this sort are Henley's *Ballade of Dead Actors*, John Payne's *Ballade of Past Delights*, and Clinton Scollard's *Where are the Ships of Tyre?*

The ballade form is undoubtedly the most important of those discussed in this chapter. It has already been used with considerable variety in theme and is doubtless capable of still other uses. Its difficulties and restrictions make it an excellent kind of verse in which to practice for a facile technique in riming.

The amateur will soon discover that rime is certainly the rudder of this sort of verse. He will find it a great help to select for his rimes sounds like *y* or *ine*, which are plentiful in English. M. Lemaître is quoted by Andrew Lang[4] as saying:—

"The poet who begins a ballade does not know very exactly what he will put into it. The rime, and nothing but the rime, will whisper things unexpected and charming, things he never would have thought of but for her, things with strange and remote relations to each other, all united in the disorder of a dream. Nothing, indeed, is richer in suggestion than the strict laws of these difficult pieces; they force the fancy to wander afield, hunting high and low; and while she seeks through all the world the foot that can wear Cinderella's slipper, she makes delightful discoveries by the way."

A delicate and facile handling of the ballade with eight-line stanzas, in iambic tetrameter, is Andrew Lang's *To Theocritus in Winter:*

---

[3] This translation, though an exquisite poem, does not follow the form of the original. It was made before the interest in these French forms had begun in England.

[4] *Longman's Magazine*, April, 1887.

Ah, leave the smoke, the wealth, the roar
Of London, and the bustling street,
For still, by the Sicilian shore
The murmur of the Muse is sweet.
Still, still, the suns of summer greet
The mountain-grave of Helikê,
And shepherds still their songs repeat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.

What though they worship Pan no more
That guarded once the shepherd's seat,
They chatter of their rustic lore,
They watch the wind among the wheat:
Cicalas chirp, the young lambs bleat,
Where whispers pine to cypress tree;
They count the waves that idly beat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.

Theocritus; Thou canst restore
The pleasant years, and over-fleet;
With Thee we live as men of yore,
We rest where running waters meet:
And then we turn unwilling feet
And seek the world—so must it be
We may not linger in the heat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.

ENVOY

Master, when rain, and snow, and sleet
And northern winds are wild, to thee
We come, we rest in thy retreat,
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.

An admirable example of the ten-line form, in iambic pentameter, is Swinburne's *A Ballade of François Villon, Prince of All Ballad-Makers:*

Bird of the bitter bright gray golden morn
Scarce risen upon the dusk of dolorous years,
First of us all and sweetest singer born
Whose far shrill note the world of new men hears.

Cleave the cold shuddering shade as twilight clears;
When song new-born put off the old world's attire
And felt its tune on her changed lips expire,
Writ foremost on the roll of them that came
Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name;

Alas the joy, the sorrow, and the scorn,
That clothed thy life with hopes and sins and fears,
And gave thee stones for bread and tares for corn
And plume plucked gaol-birds for thy starveling peers
Till death clipt close their flight with shameful shears;
Till shifts came short and loves were hard to hire,
When lilt of song nor twitch of twangling wire
Could buy thee bread or kisses; when light fame
Spurned like a ball and haled through brake and briar,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name;

Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn;
Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears;
Poor perfect voice, most blithe when most forlorn,
That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers,
Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears;
What far delight has cooled the fierce desire
That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire
On that frail flesh and soul consumed with flame,
But left more sweet than roses to respire.
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name?

ENVOY

Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire,
A harlot was Thy nurse, a God Thy sire;
Shame soiled Thy song, and song assoiled Thy shame.
But from Thy feet now death has washed the mire,
Love reads out first at head of all our quire,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name.

Ballade with Double Refrain.—A type of ballade occurring occasionally is the *ballade with double refrain.* This differs from the usual eight-line stanza variety in that

the fourth line in each stanza, as well as the eighth, is identical. This line also recurs as the second of the envoy. This naturally requires a different rime scheme for the envoys—*bbcc*, instead of *bcbc*. Henley's *Ballade of Youth and Age* shows the type at its finest. The double refrain is especially adapted to this theme. The verse is tetrameter, in the trochaic-dactylic movement.

Spring at her height on a morn at prime,
  Sails that laugh from a flying squall,
Pomp of harmony, rapture of rime—
  Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  Winter sunsets and leaves that fall,
An empty flagon, a folded page,
  A tumble-down wheel, a tattered ball—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Bells that clash in a gorgeous chime,
  Swords that clatter in outsets fall,
The words that ring and the fames that climb—
  Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  Old hymnals prone in a dusty stall,
A bald blind bird in a crazy cage,
  The scene of a faded festival—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Hours that strut as the heirs of time,
  Deeds whose rumour's a clarion-call,
Songs where the singers their souls sublime—
  Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  A staff that rests in a nook of wall,
A reeling battle, a rusted gage,
  The chant of a nearing funeral—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Envoy

Struggle and sacrifice, revel and brawl—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  A smouldering hearth and a silent stage—
  These are a type of the world of Age.

The most musical ballade in English is undoubtedly Swinburne's famous *Ballade of Dreamland.* Of light amusing themes in this form good instances are Andrew Lang's *Ballade of the Book-Hunter* and *Ballade of the Royal Game of Golf.*

Double and Triple Ballade.—The *double ballade* consists of six eight-line or ten-line stanzas on the same set of rimes. This may be written with or without the envoy. Examples of eight-line stanza double ballades are Henley's *Double Ballade of Life and Fate* and *Double Ballade of the Nothingness of Things,* and John Payne's on the *Singers of the Time.* Mr. Brian Hooker's admirable poem, a *Double Ballade of Friendship*[5] is perhaps the finest serious ballade written in America. It uses the ten-line stanza form. The *Triple Ballade* is a rare *tour de force.* Mr. Alfred Noyes's charming *Triple Ballade of Old Japan* carries the rime scheme through its nine eight-line stanzas only with the aid of a number of Japanese-sounding names in *-o.* One sound used eighteen times, one used ten (counting the refrain but once) and one used thirty-six, taxes the resources of the English language rather severely!

Chant Royal.—The *chant royal* is a development of the ballade. Mr. Gosse calls it "The *ne plus ultra* of legitimate difficulty in the construction of a poem." It consists of five eleven-line stanzas with refrain and a five-line envoy. The usual rime scheme is *ababccddede* for the stanza and *ddede* for the envoy. The difficulty of constructing a poem of sixty-one lines with only five rimes makes the form almost impossible in English. The creature is, in fact, extremely rare; it usually inhabits only books on prosody.[6]

The chant royal was used by the French poets, notably Clement Marot, for dignified, heroic themes. In English it should be attempted only in iambic pentameters.

[5] In *Poems,* N. Y., 1914.

[6] Gleeson White's collection contains seven examples, probably all there were in existence at the time.

Rondel, Rondeau and Roundel.—The *rondel, rondeau, and roundel* are allied forms, the distinction of which is purely modern. A fixed and definite form has been given to each name by the usage of the recent poets who have introduced them. The *rondel* has fourteen lines with two rimes. It is divided into three stanzas and uses the two opening lines of the first as a refrain recurring as the closing lines of the second and third stanzas. The scheme is *ABba, abAB, abbaAB.* (The capital letters indicate the refrain.) All varieties of meter and movement may be used. Here is an example by John Cameron Grant:

How is it you and I
  Are always meeting so?
I see you passing by
  Which ever way I go.

  I cannot say I know
The spell that draws us nigh
How is it you and I
  Are always meeting so?

Still Thoughts to Thoughts reply,
  And whispers ebb and flow;
I say it with a sigh
  But half confessed and low,
How is it you and I
  Are always meeting so?

As the repetition of the refrain so often in so few lines may be felt monotonous, some poets have omitted either the *A* or the *B* line of the last stanza. Mr. Austin Dobson uses a slightly different rime arrangement from the one just described. His is *ABba, abAB, abbaA*, for example, his *Wanderer:*

Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
  The old, old Love that we knew of yore;
  We see him stand by the open door,
With his great sad eyes and his bosom swelling.

He makes as though in our arms repelling,
He fain would lie as he lay before;—
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
The old, old Love that we knew of yore;

Ah! who shall help us from over-spelling,
That sweet forgotten, forbidden lore;
E'en as we doubt in our hearts once more,
With a rush of tears to our eyelids welling,
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling.

Rondeau. The *rondeau* is a modification of the rondel form. It became so popular in France during the reign of Louis XIV that writing rondeaux was as usual a polite accomplishment as sonneteering had been in the sixteenth century. Voiture's name is particularly associated with its cultivation. In English it has been used more than any other of these artificial forms except the ballade. It consists of thirteen lines divided into three stanzas, uses two rimes, and has an unrimed refrain added after the eighth and thirteenth lines. This refrain is the first half of the opening line, or often merely the first word. The scheme varies, but the most used is *aabba, aab* (refrain), *aabba* (refrain). It is in the rondeau especially that the knack of introducing the refrain in a slightly different, or even punning sense, each time, is an accomplishment to be sought for. The rondeau is usually written in iambic tetrameter or pentameter. Here are two examples:

Her china cup is white and thin;
A thousand times her heart has been
Made merry at its scarlet brink;
And in the bottom, painted pink,
A dragon greets her with a grin.

The brim her kisses loves to win;
The handle is a manikin,
Who spies the foes that chip or chink
Her china cup.

Muse, tell me if it be a sin:
I watch her lift it past her chin
  Up to the scarlet lips and drink
  The Oolong draught, somehow I think
I'd like to be the dragon in
    Her china cup.
  (Frank Dempster Sherman: *Her China Cup.*)

The gods are dead? Perhaps they are; Who knows?
  Living at least in Lemprière undeleted,
The wise, the fair, the awful, the jocose,
  Are one and all, I like to think, retreated
In some still land of lilacs and the rose.
Once high they sat, and high o'er earthly shows
  With sacrificial dance and song were greeted.
Once . . . long ago: but now the story goes,
    The gods are dead.

It must be true. The world a world of prose,
  Full-crammed with facts, in science swathed and sheeted,
Nods in a stertorous after-dinner doze.
Plangent and sad, in every wind that blows
  Who will may hear the sorry words repeated—
    The gods are dead.
  (W. E. Henley: *Gods are Dead.*)

The rime scheme here varies from the type, but keeps to the principle of but two rimes. Mr. Gosse, however, has written some fine rondeaux that use four rimes, *abbaabba* (refrain), *cddcc* (refrain). Notice that he runs the first two stanzas together:

Beside the stream and in the alder shade,
  Love sat with us one dreamy afternoon,
  When nightingales and roses made up June,
And saw the red light and the amber fade
Under the canopy the willows made,
  And watched the rising of the hollow moon,
  And listened to the water's gentle tune,
And was as silent as she was, sweet maid,
    Beside the stream.

Till with, "Farewell," he vanished from our sight,
And in the moonlight down the glade afar
His light wings glimmered like a falling star;
Then ah; She took the left path, I the right,
And now no more we sit by noon or night
Beside the stream.
(Edmund Gosse: *Lovers' Quarrel.*)

Another form of rondeau, used by François Villon, has but ten lines. It occurs but little in English. Mr. Dobson's *Rose* and *In Vain To-Day* are examples. The scheme is *abbaab* (refrain), *abba* (refrain).

Roundel. The *roundel* is apparently Swinburne's development of the rondeau. He has shown of what flexibility even such an artificial form is capable in the hands of a master of the technique of verse. His *Century of Roundels* is a collection of these slight poems in a great variety of meters, movements, and themes. His form *aba* (refrain), *bab, aba* (refrain), has been adopted by a number of poets. The refrain, as in the rondeau, is the first half of the opening line, or the first word; but unlike the refrain in the rondeau, it is rimed with the second line of the poem. Here are three of Swinburne's:

The wind's way in the deep sky's hollow
None may measure, as none can say
How the heart in her shows the swallow
The wind's way.

Hope nor fear can avoid to stay
Waves that whiten on wrecks that wallow,
Times and seasons that weave and slay.

Life and love, till the strong night swallow
Thought and hope and the red last ray,
Swim the water of years that follow
The wind's way.
(*The Way of the Wind.*)

Past as music fades that shone
While its life might last;

As a song-bird's shadow flown
  Past;

  Death's reverberate blast
Now for music's lord has blown
  Whom Thy love held fast.

Dead Thy King and void his throne;
  Yet for grief at last
Love makes music of his own
  Past.

(*A Dead Friend, VII.*)

The heavenly bay, ringed round with cliffs and moors,
Storm-stained ravines, and crags that lawns inlay,
Soothes as with love the rock whose guard secures
  The heavenly bay.

O friend, shall time take ever this away,
This blessing given of beauty that endures,
This glory shown us, not to pass but stay:

Though sight be changed for memory, love ensures
What memory changed by love to sight, would say—
The word that seals forever mine and yours
  The heavenly bay.

(*In Guernsay, I.*)

Triolet.—The *triolet* is an old form that, unlike these others, seems not to have varied since its invention in the thirteenth century. Strangely enough this slight form was used in Old French for serious verse, but the wits of the Hotel Rambouillet found it particularly adapted to epigram and satire. In English it has been employed only for light shafts of wit or for graceful compliment. It consists of eight lines in some short meter, usually in anapestic movement, and has two rimes. The first line is repeated as the fourth, and the first two as the seventh and eighth. The rimes run *ABaAabAB*. (The capitals indicate the refrain.) The *b*-rime is usually feminine.

Though triolets seem very easy to write, good ones are really rare. The refrain should have charm or cleverness in itself to bear repetition. The fifth and sixth lines should contain a thought which leads to the introduction of the refrain with a slight surprise at its new turn. This is the only way the triolet may gain climax. The refrain repeated with exactly the same meaning gives the disappointing effect of a "Limerick" with first and last lines identical. This new turn is hard to get with so little room in which to prepare for it, but it is worth trying for. The advantage of the triolet is its apparent artlessness and spontaneity. Mr. Gosse says of it: "It is charming; nothing can be more ingenuously mischievous, more playfully sly, than this tiny trill of epigrammatic melody, turning so simply on its own innocent axis." The three following fulfill successfully the requirements of the triolet.

When first we met, we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master;
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess.
Who could foretell the sore distress,
This irretrievable disaster,
When first we met?—we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master.

(Robert Bridges.)

Rose kissed me to-day,
Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
To a savor of sorrow;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
Will she kiss me to-morrow?

(Austin Dobson.)

I saw her shadow on the grass
That day we walked together,

Across the field where the pond was
I saw her shadow on the grass.
And now I sigh and say, Alas;
  That e'er in summer weather
I saw her shadow on the grass
  That day we walked together.
(Arthur Symons.)

Villanelle.—The *villanelle*, as usually written now, either in French or English, follows the model of Jean Passerat's famous example, *J'ay perdu ma tourterelle.* It is composed of nineteen lines arranged in five three-line stanzas and an envoy, and has two rimes. Each stanza is rimed *aba*, and the envoy, *abaa*. The first and third lines of the first stanza are used as the refrain, alternating as the third line of each successive stanza and finally closing the envoy as a couplet. It is written in short meters with iambic or anapestic movement. This is a difficult form, suitable particularly for themes that circle about one thought. It has always been associated chiefly with pastoral subjects, but John Davidson in his *Grub Street* has put the form to more serious use.

On her hand she leans her head,
  By the banks of the busy Clyde;
Our two little boys are in bed.

The pitiful tears are shed,
  She has nobody by her side;
On her hand she leans her head.

I should be working; instead
  I dream of my sorrowful bride,
And our two little boys in bed.

Were it well if we four were dead?
  The grave at least is wide.
On her hand she leans her head.

She stares at the embers red;
  She dashes the tears aside
And kisses our boys in bed.

"God give us our daily bread;
Nothing we ask beside."
On her hand she leans her head;
Our two little boys are in bed.

Other good examples of the villanelle are Henley's *A Dainty Thing's the Villanelle*, and Austin Dobson's *On a Nankin Plate*.

Sestina.—The *sestina* is a form of extraordinary and ingenious difficulty, a difficulty not of rimes, as with the double ballade or chant royal, but of even more rigid restriction. It was the invention of the celebrated troubadour Arnaut Daniel, but through its cultivation by Dante and Petrarch has come to be an Italian form rather than French. Though it is no more difficult to write in English than in French or Italian, its extremely arbitrary complexity has appealed to but few of our poets.

The sestina has six stanzas of six lines each and ends with a tercet. The six end words of the first stanza are repeated in each of the others, but in a fixed order, different in each stanza. If we represent the end words of the first stanza by the first six digits, the following table will indicate the terminal word order of the sestina:

First	Stanza	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Second	"	6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3
Third	"	3, 6, 4, 1, 2, 5
Fourth	"	5, 3, 2, 6, 1, 4
Fifth	"	4, 5, 1, 3, 6, 2
Sixth	"	2, 4, 6, 5, 3, 1

The lines of the concluding tercet end with the words represented by 2, 4, 6, and use the remaining words 1, 3, 5, either near the beginning or in the middle of the lines.

It is evident that no end word occurs in the same place in any two stanzas of the poem, and that the last word of each stanza is the first end word of the next. The sestina is usually unrimed, but the words may be chosen so that

they rime as follows in the odd stanzas, *abaabb;* the even stanzas will then rime, *babbaa.*

One admires a poem written in a form so complex as this, more for its ingenuity than for its thought. It requires a poet of real facility to make a sestina that is anything more than a clever solution of a word puzzle. Swinburne's *I Saw My Soul at Rest Upon a Day,* a poem in this form, has more music than meaning. His delight in overcoming metrical difficulties even led him to construct a double sestina, but few people can endure its monotony, which eddies through twelve twelve-line stanzas. Writing sestinas —even simple ones—is wasted ingenuity, for no reader can tell without careful analysis whether the poem conforms exactly to the rules. Kipling has surmounted the difficulties and produced in his *Sestina of the Tramp-Royal* a poem as well as a puzzle. To write realistic diction in a form associated with the ethereal courtly love of Provence and sonneteering Italy is amusingly characteristic of the modernity of the author. Kipling has departed from the strict rule in the use of the end words in the tercet. He has placed the words represented by 1, 3, 5, as terminals, and 2, 4, 6 as mid-line words. Arnaut Daniel has these sets reversed. The poem follows:

Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all—
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world,
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till they die.

What do it matter where or 'ow we die,
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all—
The different ways that different things are done,
An' men an' women lovin' in this world;
Takin' our chances as they come along,
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good.

In cash or credit—no, it aren't no good;
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,
Unless you lived your life but one day long,
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done;
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,
In various situations round the world—
For 'im that doth not work must surely die;
But that's no reason man should labor all
'Is life on one same shift, life's none so long.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along,
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,
For something in my 'ead upset me all,
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 'twas for good,
An', out at sea, be'eld the dock-light die,
An' met my mate the wind that tramps the world;

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently, you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another—likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world; whatever she 'ath done—
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.
So, write, before I die, " 'E liked it all:"

A few other of these artificial French forms, the rondelet, the lai, the kyrielle, the virelay, and the pantoum are represented in English by so few examples that it hardly seems worth while to describe them here. The reader who is interested is referred to the article of Mr. Gosse and the collection of Mr. Gleeson White, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

Trochaic Verse[1]

The trochaic movement occurs in sporadic lines throughout all our early verse, but it was not definitely recognized as a special norm until the Elizabethan period. Then it came into use only in short lyrics. Its place in English has always been inferior to that of the iambic movement. The best reason for this is probably to be found in the genius of the language itself.

The great majority of phrases in English—and the phrase is the unit of rhythm in prose—begin with an article, preposition, or conjunction, which in our pronunciation is merged into the word which follows, so that the phrase has a rising movement. It is, of course, true that most dissyllabic words have the accent on the first syllable, so that these words considered individually have a trochaic rhythm, but when they are used as part of a phrase they lose this individual rhythm and become an element in the phrase rhythm. For example, the word *shooting* has a falling movement when it is pronounced alone, but the phrase *a shooting star* has a rising movement.[2] The fact that most English phrases begin as this one does, with an unstressed syllable, makes a rising movement the commonest English movement. Trochaic verse is therefore less natural in our language than iambic.

A direct reversal of these conditions obtains in the

[1] *See* also Chapter VI.

[2] If, however, a phrase is made up of a number of trochaic words in succession, particularly when they are set off by commas, they maintain a trochaic rhythm which may override the iambic rhythm with which the phrase, or line, started, *e. g.*

On lion, dragon, wyvern, griffon, swan

Bohemian language. Bohemian has no article, and its proclitic prepositions are so completely merged with the words with which they are associated that they lose their syllabic value. The result is that most phrases in Bohemian have a falling rhythm, and the genius of the language may be said to be trochaic. And Bohemian verse, as a consequence, is as naturally trochaic as English verse is iambic.

Whatever may be the reason for the preference, the fact remains that our verse has been, and still is, chiefly iambic. As a result, the possibilities of the trochaic movement have been but slightly developed. We do not find in it the rhythmic subtleties which succeeding generations of poets have imparted to the iambic.

We may study the characteristics of the trochaic movement in the song of Juno and Ceres in the *Tempest* (IV, 1):

Honor, riches, marriage-blessing,
Long continuance, and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you!
Juno sings her blessing on you.

Earth's increase, foison plenty,
Barns and garners never empty;
Vines with clustering bunches growing;
Plants with goodly burthen bowing;
Spring come to you at the farthest
In the very end of harvest!
Scarcity and want shall shun you;
Ceres' blessing so is on you.

There is a lightness and apparent rapidity[3] to this passage that verse in the same meter and rhythm but with an

[3] Tests made in a psychological laboratory have shown that trochaic rhythm is actually more rapid than iambic. The time relation between the unstressed syllable and the stressed in iambic verse is as 1:2; in trochaic verse, as 1:1½.

(A. S. Hurst and J. McKay: "Experiments on Time Relations of Poetic Measures," *University Toronto Studies, Psychological Series*, vol. 1, 1900.)

iambic movement, does not bear. This lightness makes the movement better for short lyrics than for any extended work, where the choppy effect and limited variation produce great monotony. Few readers can enjoy many pages of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, or Porter's translation of the *Kalevala* at one time.

The characteristic trochaic effect is especially marked in the passage just quoted from Shakespeare, because every line has a light ending. Light endings are not so common in rimed trochaic verse as masculine endings—for example, the trochaic parts of Milton's *L'Allegro* or the following from Fletcher:

> Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
> Sorrow calls no time that's gone:
> Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
> Makes not fresh nor grow again.
> Trim thy locks, look cheerfully;
> Fate's hid ends eyes cannot see.
> Joys as winged dreams fly fast,
> Why should sadness longer last?
> Grief is but a mound to woe;
> Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no moe.

Though the direct attack,[4] used throughout, gives these lines an undoubted trochaic movement, the ending on stressed syllables makes the passage approach nearer an iambic effect than the Shakespearian song does. Besides this, the introduction of extra stresses in lines like,

> | Fate's hĭd | ends êyes | cannot | see,

and

> | Gentlest | fair, môurn, | mourn no | moe

makes them, apart from their context, somewhat ambiguous in movement. Furthermore, compare the phrasing of the

[4] *See* above, p. 21.

two passages. In the Shakespearian song, the two lines,

Honor, riches, marriage-blessing,

and

Barns and garners never empty,

are trochaic throughout in phrasing;[5] and lines that end in phrases like *foison plenty, bunches growing, burthen bowing,* and *end of harvest* have strong trochaic support. On the other hand, many lines in the song from Fletcher end with such iambic phrases, as, *nor sigh nor groan, no time that's gone, the sweetest rain, nor grow again, a mound to woe*—all in conflict with the movement set up at the beginning of each line. A studied agreement of, or conflict of, movement and phrasing is therefore as important in producing effects in trochaic verse as it is in iambic.

All the methods of varying iambic verse can be used also with trochaic, but more sparingly, for this movement is much harder to keep steady. Light stresses are used by poets in about the same proportion as in iambic verse, but they seem to stand out with greater prominence in trochaic verse—as is very evident when the verse is read aloud. This conspicuousness of syllables which are usually slurred in speech gives a much more artificial effect to trochaic verse. In a passage like the following from *Hiawatha,* this effect is particularly noticeable:

I should answer, I should tell you
"From the forest and the prairies,
From the great lakes of the Northland,
From the land of the Ojibways,
From the land of the Dacotahs,
From the mountains, moors, and fenlands."

It may be, of course, that such passages are better read by obliterating all the light stresses, thus turning the verse

[5] *See* above, p. 78.

into dimeter with a quadruple rhythm, *e. g.* instead of,

| I should | answer, | I should | tell you,

we might read,

I should | answer, I should | tell you.

In the last two lines of the following passage of trochaic verse, however, where such a change in rhythmical pattern is hardly possible, the effect of the light stresses is awkward:

| And we | met: You | knew not | me,
Mistress of your joys and fears;
Held my hand that held the key
| Of the | treasure | of your | years,
| Of the | fountain | of your | tears.
(Alice Meynell: *An Unmasked Festival.*)

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, the trochaic movement was used only in tetrameter or trimeter, but since that time it has been developed in the longer meters. Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, and the later poets used it frequently in hexameter, heptameter, and octameter. In fact, for these long meters it has come to be quite as much used as the iambic movement.

Browning's *One Word More* is almost the unique example in English of the trochaic movement used in unrimed pentameter. This singularly beautiful poem gains its effect with remarkably little variation.

Raphael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
These the world might view—but one, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her life-time?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Raphael's glory,

Raphael's cheek so duteous and so loving—
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Raphael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

There is frequent use of light stress here, but never more than one to a line; the phrasing never runs beyond the line. No line in the whole poem begins with an unstressed syllable, lest the movement be turned into iambic. The variety is gained wholly by shifting the position of the light stresses and by a constant interplay of phrasing with the movement. The fact that all the cesuras in this quotation come after a stressed syllable modifies the choppiness that often characterizes trochaic verse.

In this form, Browning does not venture on any marked variation from the normal until the twenty-ninth line of his poem:

Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
| Cried, and the | world cried | too, | "Ours, the | treasure!"
Suddenly, as rare things will it vanished.

Here, the running of the phrase over into the next line, and the introduction of a trisyllabic and a monosyllabic foot, almost destroy the trochaic movement, but the third line steadies it again. Later on, when the movement is firmly established, the poet ventures to introduce lines with two extra stresses, *e. g.*

| Not the | moon's sâme | side bôrn | late in | Florence.

Swinburne and Tennyson have used longer meters in trochaic movement with great success. The longer the line, however, the less distinctively trochaic it tends to become, unless strongly supported by phrasing. The reason for this is, doubtless, that a movement, when once set up, becomes merely subjective,[6] and the English ear, being more accustomed to iambic movement, instinctively tries to hear the

[6] *See* above, p. 72.

line as iambic if it is possible to do so. The fact that in these longer meters a line may start trochaically and apparently end iambically, thus adding a new source of variety, may account for the preference of recent poets for the trochaic movement in the longer meters.

Here is an example of this movement in lines of six feet:

> Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy face was hidden,
> And the lips and eyes that loved thee blind and dumb,
> Song forsook their tongues that held thy name forbidden,
> Light their eyes that saw the strange God's kingdom come.
> (Swinburne: *Last Oracle.*)

Note that alternate lines have light endings, that there is but one light stress (beginning line 2), and that the phrasing is chiefly iambic. The danger of upsetting trochaic movement by phrasing is exemplified in the following passage from the same poem:

> Old and younger Gods are buried or begotten
> | From up- | rising | to down- | setting | of the | sun,
> Risen from eastward, fallen to westward and forgotten,
> And their springs are many, but their end is one.

If, in reading the second line, one slurs the three light stresses, the line will run with a very untrochaic movement.

Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* is the best known example of the use of this movement in an eight foot line:

> Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
> Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle horn.

The tendency of this meter is always to break into two tetrameter lines. Tennyson occasionally relieves this tendency by varying the cesura, as in,

> Many a night from yonder ivied casement, || ere I went to rest,
> Did I look on great Orion, || sloping slowly to the West.

Only once, in this poem, the author starts his line with an unstressed syllable, giving an iambic movement:

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light
As I have seen the rosy red flashing in the northern light.

As, however, there is no unstressed syllable before the cesura, which comes between *red* and *flashing*, in the second half of the line the trochaic swing is restored. A reversal of this effect occurs frequently in the poem in such stanzas as,

Love took up the glass of time, and turned it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Here, the cesura occurring before the unstressed syllable *and*, the latter half of the line becomes iambic.

A poem which has as its pattern rhythm throughout, a line beginning trochaically and ending iambically is Swinburne's *Ballad of Bath:*

City lulled asleep by the chime of passing years,
Sweeter smiles thy rest than the radiance round thy peers;
Only love and lovely remembrance here have place.
Time on thee lies lighter than music on men's ears;
Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

The peculiarity here is that the third foot in each line has three syllables and that the phrasing usually allows a slight cesura in this foot. The result is a musical ebb and flow from one movement to another.

If the trochaic character is to be maintained throughout a long line, the internal pauses must come before stressed syllables. Kipling's *Rustum Beg* is a case in point:

Rustum Beg of Kolazai—slightly backward Native State—
Lusted for a C. S. I.—so began to sanitate.
Built a gaol and hospital—nearly built a city drain—
Till his faithful subjects all thought their ruler was insane.

Every cesura here occurs between two stressed syllables.

Tennyson has given us a very remarkable example of trochaic rhythm in long lines in his *To Virgil.* This is written in nonameter, the longest recognized meter in English:

Roman Virgil, thou that singest
  Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
  wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre,
Landscape-lover, lord of language
  more than he who sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
  flashing out from many a golden phrase.

Most of the pauses here precede stressed syllables and the effect is markedly trochaic. Toward the ends of the lines, however, the phrasing is inclined to swing toward the iambic. One of Tennyson's tricks in this poem is to break the printing of the line always after the fourth foot in such a way that the second half begins with a stressed syllable, although there may be no punctuation at the break. This trick gains a second direct attack and further supports the trochaic rhythm.

The examples given throughout this chapter all show the necessity of supporting trochaic rhythm by trochaic phrasing if the special quality of this rhythm is to be maintained. And the chief thing for the poet to study is the careful management of the cesura.

CHAPTER XVII

Triple Rhythm[1]

ANAPESTIC AND DACTYLIC VERSE

The two movements in triple rhythm, anapestic and dactylic, are much closer in character than are iambic and trochaic. We saw in the previous chapter that the trochaic is more unstable than the iambic, that the genius of the language leans so strongly toward the iambic that long trochaic lines almost inevitably swing toward the more natural movement. This instability is true to an even greater extent in the relationship of dactylic to anapestic verse, so that there are comparatively few poems that keep distinctive the special character of dactylic movement. In most respects, then, we may treat both kinds of triple rhythm as one. In the questions pertaining to the use of light stresses and extra accents they present the same problems. In their origin and history they may be reviewed together.

Though literary verse from the early English period down almost into the eighteenth century was prevailingly iambic or trochaic, the irregular native English rhythm persisted in much of the popular poetry, and occasionally appeared in the work of experimenters like Skelton and Spenser. Many of the romances, ballads, and miracle plays are either in "tumbling" rhythm or in a rough duple rhythm that often falls into duple-triple, but such freedom was scorned by the literary poets.

In the midst of this tumbling verse the anapestic movement seems in sporadic instances to have developed by accident. The first dozen or so lines of Skelton's *To Maystres*

[1] *See* also Chapter VI.

Margaret Hussey,[2] the *Second Shepherd's Play*, and the prologue to *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1552) are examples.

Lanier quotes an early sixteenth century *Ever and Never Song* and the old *Ballad of Agincourt*, the dactylic movement of which was imitated by Drayton and later by Tennyson. Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Husbandry* is written chiefly in monotonously facile anapests. But triple rhythm seems to have been considered appropriate for "low" and popular themes, so that Gascoigne in 1575 wrote, "wee are fallen into such a playne and simple manner of writing, that there is none other foote used but one."[3] Shakespeare and other dramatists in their songs written to already existing popular tunes, occasionally allowed an anapestic line like,

> Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
> (*Blow, Blow, Thou Winter's Wind.*)

and

> With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
> (*It Was a Lover and His Lass.*)

but complete poems in this rhythm were not common in the Elizabethan period, or for a long time afterward. Most of the Elizabethan and Jacobean examples of anapestics are songs and ballads written to very even triple measures, some of them dance tunes. Chappell[4] gives the music and words of half a dozen of these ballads that date from the end of the sixteenth century. The more popular ones, like *Packington's Pound*, had new words written to them frequently. Anapestics that rely upon tunes to help the rhythm are likely to be rough. Some of the best are Desdemona's *Willow Song;* a charming parallel to it in Thomas Deloney's *Gentle Craft*, beginning,

---

[2] Skelton died in 1529.

[3] *Certayne Notes of Instruction.*

[4] *Popular Music of the Olden Time.* 1: 96, 123, 158, 169, 223, 349.

When fancy first fram'd our likings in love,
Sing all of greene willow;

and Walton's "Conversion of a piece of an old catch,"

Man's life is but vain, for 'tis subject to pain,
And sorrow, and short as a bubble.[5]

The seventeenth century still considered triple rhythm only for poems intended to be sung. There were a few popular tunes current in triple measures to which rough ballads were written. Dorset and Rochester wrote one or two songs in good anapests that stand alone without the help of tunes. Cleveland, and later Dryden made a few experiments in the dactylic movement, but the uncertainty of them shows that these poets were depending upon a tune to carry them through.[6]

Triple rhythm was not definitely established as a purely poetic norm until Prior wrote his charming light anapests. Since his time the rhythm has had an important place in English prosody.

For society verse anapestic continued to be a favorite movement throughout the eighteenth century. Swift, Byron, Shenstone, Goldsmith, all wrote amusing trifles with a skilful handling of this tripping measure. At the end of the century, with Scott's *Bonnie Dundee* and *Lochinvar*, it began to be used for other themes than those of society verse. Byron used both the dactylic and anapestic move-

[5] Professor Schelling (*Elizabethan Lyrics*, pp. xli and 211) calls attention to half a dozen other interesting poems in not very smooth anapestics.

[6] The song in the *Maiden Queen*, "I feed a flame within, which so torments me," is doubtless intended to fit a dactylic rhythm, but Dryden was accustomed to phrasing in duple rhythms:

Yet he for whom I grieve shall never know it;
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it:
Not a sigh nor a tear my pain discloses,
But they fall silently; like dew on roses.

ments in his *Hebrew Melodies*, and Poe, Browning, Tennyson and Swinburne showed that no restriction in themes could be placed on triple rhythms in the future. Praed continued in the delightful manner of Prior; and Holmes, the American "florist in verses," wrote dozens of "occasional" anapestics. Lowell in his *Fable for Critics* used this movement in a style similar to Goldsmith's in the *Retaliation*. Tennyson in his ballads and Swinburne in his *Dolores* and the *Hymn to Proserpine* brought out new technical possibilities. Of more recent poets, Richard Hovey has done the most interesting things in triple rhythms. His *Taleisin* has some experiments in unrimed anapestic lyrics, and his *Barney Magee* is in the most abandoned rollicking dactylics.

As the triple rhythms have not been in use so long as the duple, the technique of them has not been as yet developed with so much subtlety; and the later poets have turned more toward the duple-triple which seems capable of finer things. Triple rhythm flows more rapidly than duple,[7] and its galloping lilt is more artificial. This artificiality may be due to the fact that there is more duple than triple rhythm in speech; that is, there are more phrases in conversational prose that would make perfect trimeter or tetrameter lines in duple than in triple rhythm[8]; therefore the word order is not so natural. The beat, too, is more inevitable; there is less chance for shading the emphasis, or for the doubtful hovering stresses which characterize certain types of blank verse.

Notice how few actually light stresses there are in Scott's *Lochinvar:*

> He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone,
> He swam the Esk River when ford there was none;

[7] Though probably the actual time value for feet of three syllables is the same as for those of two.

[8] It may be noticed, further, that when prose becomes over-rhythmical it falls into stretches of duple rather than triple rhythm.

But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late;
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmaids, and kinsmen, and brothers and all.
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
"O, come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

The only emphasis not required by the actual phrasing is that on *ere* in the third line; the name *Lochinvar* seems able to sustain an accent on either the first or the last syllable, according to the rhythmical demand. This scarcity of light stresses is usual in both anapestic and dactylic verse. The decisive character of triple rhythm makes them much more prominent when they do occur, than they are in duple rhythm; a frequent use of them is, therefore, to be avoided. Swift's line:

But how to dispose of it to the best bidder,

one may trip over at the first reading, for one instinctively tries to find a stronger word than *to* to bear the third stress. A reader may find the same difficulty with lines in Goldsmith's *Retaliation*,

Our Garrick a salad, for in him we see . . .

and

That Hickey's a capon; and by the same rule.

Lines are especially questionable when the rhythm requires such a wrench in phrasing as to introduce an extra accent as well as a light stress. Browning's

One dissertates, he is candid,
(*Master Hugues.*)

is an example. The dactylic movement of the poem apparently requires us to read

| One disser- | tates, he is | candid,

though the phrasing pulls us in another direction. And when one has learned how to read correctly the line in the same poem,

Five . . . O Danaides, O Sieve!

he had better mark the scansion or he will surely trip over it again.[9] The eighteenth century poets could admit more light accents than their successors, without tripping the reader, because dissyllabic feet were then so rare in this rhythm that the reader might assume that the stress must occur on every third syllable. Thus, Prior's earlier readers probably caught his intention at once in the line,

Then take Mat's word for it, the sculptor is paid,
(*For My Own Monument.*)

and, going lightly over the syllable *word*, put the stress on *for*. The modern reader, however, accustomed to dissyllabic variation, may at first sight read,

Then | take Mat's | word for 't, the | sculptor is | paid.

The writer of anapestic and dactylic verse should not rely too much on the established movement carrying him through; a line is bad if its phrasing distinctly leads the reader into a movement other than that which the writer expects him to give it. The rhythm of well known tunes helped the eighteenth century ballad writer over such lines as,

The Lord knows who must set 'em right

or,

[9] | Five . . . O Dan | aides, | O Sieve!

seems to be the way the poet intended it to go.

And put us into a right summary way,

but this can hardly justify them as good anapestics.[10]

If the light stress is more prominent in triple rhythm than in duple, the force of an extra accent is less. Professor Saintsbury[11] has called attention to the advantage of the anapestic movement in the treatment of a syllable like *child* in Prior's

The God of us versemen, you know, child, the Sun.

Here the colloquial address has the casual light value that belongs to it; in iambic movement it would be over prominent. This quality may, of course, work with an opposite effect; the hurry of the movement may slight an important extra accented syllable. Falstaff hardly receives his due in Prior's line,

Prithee quit this caprice; and as old Falstaff says.

But such blemishes are not characteristic of Prior. Browning's anapestics are frequently choked with words that demand more stress than the movement will allow them. In *How They Brought the Good News* this trick of phrasing gives a suggestion of recklessly galloping over all obstacles. One feels this effect in lines like,

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,

or,

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear,

---

[10] The | Lord knows who | must set 'em | right.

and

And | put us in- | to a right | summary | way.

Dr. Milton Percival's introduction to his collection of *Political Ballads* (Oxford, 1916) emphasizes the fact that such poetry is intended to be sung, rather than read.

[11] *History of English Prosody*, 2: 430.

and especially in

'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff.

In the last two lines quoted, the alliteration counts for much. On the other hand, does not the spondaic phrasing, combined with Browning's grotesque fondness for cluttering consonants, excessively obstruct the movement in,

Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,

and

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white?

And, again, the usual rhythm of the phrase *a great yellow star* leads the reader to stress *great* in the line,

At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see,

and so throws him completely off the track at the first reading. In *Saul*, Browning has more anapestics that do not read easily. The phrasing must be considerably wrenched to read the following as anapestic lines:

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine round its chords . . .

and

That opes the rock, helps its glad labor.

Kipling in his *Young British Soldier*, the emphatic beat of which cries out for a swinging ballad tune, has helped the reader by italicizing two places where he wishes light stresses to fall,

Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,
So - oldier *of* the Queen,

and

But the worst o' your foes is the sun over 'ead:
You *must* wear your 'elmet for all that is said.

This last example suggests one more point about phrasing. Kipling apparently italicized *must* because it would not receive the proper emphasis if the reader, repeating the rhythm with which the preceding line begins, put the stress on the third word, *wear*. A stress here would also slightly vary the anapestic movement. Now compare with this the effect in the two following lines of Goldsmith's *Retaliation:*

> A flattering painter who made it his care
> To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.

As anapestic lines may ordinarily begin with either one or two unstressed syllables the reader may try to start the second line here with a stress either on *draw* or *men*. But if he puts it on *draw*, beginning this line as he did the one before, both the rhythm and the meter will be thrown out. The poet, then, may start his anapestic lines as he will, provided he leaves no doubt as to which syllable should be given the first stress. There can be no hesitation in this matter in the following couplet from the same poem:

> Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

Of course, all these small technical points in phrasing are of minor importance. They are merely things to be observed if the poet wishes to be sure that his triple rhythms will flow with absolute smoothness. When doubtful anapestics are read aloud "at sight," the effect is like that of listening to an amateur pianist who goes back to pick up the notes that he dropped out in his haste.

Byron's anapestics are smooth and unvaried—too smooth for many ears. The excellent roll of the well-known *Sennacherib* is gained by using long vowels in the stressed places and blending them with sonorous tone-color. Poe's *For Annie* gains its smoothness by a phrasing that, except for its pauses, makes no conflict with the movement. One line takes up the rhythm just where the preceding one left

it, *i. e.*, lines with a light ending or double light ending are compensated at the beginning of the next, *e. g.*

Thank Heaven! the crisis—
  The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
  Is over at last—
And the fever called "Living"
  Is conquered at last.
  . . . . . .
Of a water that flows,
  With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
  Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
  Down under ground.

In this poem the lines are evenly divided between those with strong and those with weak endings. In longer measures, the similar simple expedient of making the cesura fall after a stressed or an unstressed syllable, or of omitting the cesura, may be a means of varying a rhythm, the insistence of which becomes monotonous. Byron uses about as many masculine as feminine cesuras. The preponderance of feminine in Scott's *Lochinvar* adds to the galloping effect of the poem. The same mood is produced by the amphibrach phrasing in Browning's

I galloped, Dirk galloped, we galloped all three,

and Byron's

The Bourbon! the Bourbon!
  Sans country or home
We'll follow the Bourbon
  To plunder old Rome.

Kipling's *Screw-Guns* is written in anapestic hexameter, but its rapid ballad swing is gained by a consistent use of a

feminine cesura which divides every line in half, so that the poem is practically in trimeter. The internal rime in the chorus tends further to shorten the meter.[12]

Smokin' my pipe on the mountings,
sniffin' the mornin' cool,
I climbs in my old brown gaiters
along o' my old brown mule.
The monkeys can say what our road was—
the wild goat 'e knows where we passed.
Stand easy, you long-eared old darlin's!
Out drag-ropes! With shrapnel! Hold
fast—'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns—the screw-
guns they all love you!
So when we take tea with a few guns, o'
course you will know what to do—hoo! hoo!
Just send in your Chief and surrender—it's
worse if you fights or you runs:
You may hide in the caves, they'll be only
your graves, but you can't get away
from the guns!

Tennyson's *Voyage of Maeldune* is, with occasional exceptions, in the same meter—hexameter—but gives an altogether different rhythmic impression. In the third stanza, quoted below, each whole line is felt as a distinct unit, because the pauses in the phrasing may come after the fourth foot as often as after the third. Furthermore, they are almost all masculine.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd
at before,
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,

[12] The effect of printing long lines with internal rime, instead of breaking them into short meters, is to increase the speed at which one will read. One generally pauses less at a cesura than at a line ending.

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without sound, and the long waterfalls
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the mountain walls.
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm flourish'd up beyond sight,
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above it there flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull couldn't low, and the dog couldn't bark.

Tennyson and Swinburne are our greatest masters in the management of these long anapestic measures. They have used them in stretches of narrative and descriptive work where the danger of monotony in this movement is increased by the length of the poems. The chief method of variation is this constant change in the position and character of the pauses.

Occasionally an effect is gained by giving the long line its full sweep without any pause. Here are a pair of lines with no cesura and with a perfect coincidence of phrasing and movement:

And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags.

(Tennyson: *Revenge.*)

A splendid handling of this rhythm in a still longer meter —heptameter—is the middle movement of Swinburne's *Lake of Gaube.* In the following excerpt from the joyous description of a deep dive, the cesuras, which are chiefly feminine, are varied as we read from line to line, and the longer pauses occur only at the ends of lines. This, by preventing any tendency to break regularly, gives the heptameters their full reach.

Free utterly now, though the freedom endure but the space
of a breath,
And living, though girdled about with the darkness and
coolness and strangeness of death:
Each limb and each pulse of the body rejoicing, each nerve
of the spirit at rest,
All sense of the soul's life rapture, a passionate peace in its
blindness blest.
So plunges the downward swimmer, embraced of the water
unfathomed of man,
The darkness unplummeted, icier than seas in midwinter,
for blessing or ban;
And swiftly and sweetly, when strength and breath fall
short, and the dive is done,
Shoots up as a shaft from the dark depth shot, sped straight
into sight of the sun.

The last two lines quoted show one more kind of variation in the anapestic movement. Several of the feet have two syllables instead of three so that the rhythm really changes to duple-triple. The same change occurs in the passages quoted above from Kipling and Tennyson, *e. g.*

I | climbs in my | old brôwn | gaiters a- | long o' my
| old brôwn | mule.

and,

Where a | silent | ocean | always | broke on a
silent | shore.

This use of from two to four dissyllabic feet in a hexameter or heptameter changes completely the character of the rhythm. The use of but a single dissyllabic foot in the line,

And we | came to a | Silent | Isle that we | never had
| touched at be- | fore,

gives some variation without a real interruption to the anapestic movement. The poet, of course, is at liberty to change the flow of his anapestics or dactylics to as great an

extent as his ear finds pleasing. In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth, the poets used but little variation of this kind. A dissyllabic foot might occur only at the cesura, as in the line,

Other | horses are | clowns, and | these maca- | ronies.
(Tickell: *On a Woman of Fashion.*)

However, after Tennyson and Swinburne developed the duple-triple rhythm in long meters, poets have frequently fallen into this rhythm for specially varied effects in their long line anapestics. In fact, Coleridge's *Christabel*, in the earlier part of the century, had shown that the three movements, iambic, iambic-anapestic, and anapestic, could flow agreeably from one to another in the same poem.

To illustrate an interesting use of this dissyllabic variation one more passage from Swinburne may be quoted, this time from *March, an Ode.* This is written in octameters which rise and fall in glorious long rhythmic sweeps, usually with a possible slight pause in the middle; though in the first, second, and fifth of the lines quoted below, very definite cesuras divide the meter unsymmetrically. About eight or nine dissyllabic feet are distributed through this passage; enough for variety but not enough to make us feel that the rhythmic pattern has changed to duple-triple.

For the breath of thy lips is freedom, and freedom's the
sense of thy spirit, the sound of thy song,
Glad god of the north-east wind, whose heart is as high
as the hands of thy kingdom are strong,
Thy kingdom whose empire is terror and joy, twin-featured
and fruitful of births divine,
Days lit with the flame of the lamps of the flowers, and
nights that are drunken with dew for wine,
And sleep not for joy of the stars that deepen and quicken
a denser and fiercer throng.
And the world that thy breath bade whiten and tremble
rejoices at heart as they strengthen and shine,

And earth gives thanks for the glory bequeathed her, and
knows of thy reign that it wrought not wrong.

If we review the types of anapestic verse discussed in this chapter we may distinguish two classes, represented in their extremes by the techniques of Browning and of Swinburne. In the Browning type—in *Saul*, for instance—the frequent use of extra accents roughens the rhythm, but condenses and emphasizes the thought. On the other hand, in the wild excitement of sailing before the wind in Swinburnian anapestics we but vaguely apprehend the meaning. Such perfect facility in triple rhythm means that at best only one syllable out of three can be important; the sense seems thin and the construction often tenuous. Ideal anapestics would be those which lie somewhere between these two extremes.

The dactylic movement so easily runs into anapestic that it can keep its individuality only by a special effort on the part of both poet and reader. Ordinarily neither a reader nor a listener is clearly conscious of a change from one movement to the other in poems that use both. The direct attack of the second and fourth lines in the following do not make one feel as he reads that the movement has changed:

O children of banishment,
Souls overcast;
Were the lights ye see vanish meant
Always to last,
Ye would know not the sun overshining
the shadows and stars overpast.
(Swinburne: *Hertha.*)

The same thing is true of the single dactylic lines in the passages quoted, a few pages back, from Poe and Kipling. Such lines properly should not be considered dactylic. We call dactylic a single line in triple rhythm which begins with direct attack, but the movement which the line would

have were it alone may be overridden by the movement of the lines which precede it.

A poet may introduce dactylic lines into an anapestic movement to throw special emphasis on a phrase. If the preceding line ends with a stress the change will be more apparent. There are fine examples of this in Tennyson's *Charge of the Heavy Brigade:*

> The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
> Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
> Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stay'd;
> For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
> When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
> And he call'd, "Left wheel into line!" and they wheel'd and obey'd.
> Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew not why,
> And he turn'd half round, and he bade his trumpeter sound
> To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade
> To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
> "Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
> Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

The changes to dactylic movement here are unusually clever tricks in rhythm. The poet has not only gained the emphasis of direct attack but has also made the reader (if he follows the poet's intention) give the repeated phrases *dówn the hill* and *úp the hill* a strikingly suggestive movement by stressing their first syllables.

Stretches of dactylics and anapestics are commonly blended in the same poem. Swinburne's *To Walt Whitman in America* starts with a dactylic stanza, but continues through the rest of the poem in anapestics, with the exception of one more dactylic stanza toward the end. And Byron's *Lachin y Gair* has two stanzas with an anapestic swing, followed

by three in which the dactylic dominates. It is significant that the more emphatic and stirring half of the poem is this latter dactylic part.

The poems which sustain the special character of the dactylic movement throughout are all in short meters. The force of the direct attack must come at frequent intervals to oppose the tendency to relapse into the anapestic movement.

Hood's *Bridge of Sighs* is a well known example:

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

That this has a special character imparted by the dactylic movement one can hardly deny. If it is read immediately after Poe's *To Annie*, also in dimeter, but anapestic—the difference in feeling is very evident. The movement keeps its individuality by the frequency of the direct attack combined with a consistent use of triple endings. The phrasing will not allow the reader to go astray; he cannot find a place for more than two stresses in a line, and there is no doubt of where they must come. But much has been sacrificed to secure this perfect dactylic movement. The poem is dactylic but is it much else?

Whenever we find an attempt to sustain a purely dactylic

movement by phrasing and by the use of triple endings, the poem inevitably becomes monotonous and artificial, because the dactylic words in English are chiefly participles in *-ing* or in *-ly*. The jingle of Hood's

> Sisterly, brotherly,
> Fatherly, motherly
> Feelings had changed,

hardly belongs in a serious poem. In light verse, however, this effect may be exactly what is sought after, and the surprise at the triple rimes adds to the fun. Richard Hovey's *Barney McGee* is a fine example:

> Barney McGee, there's no end of good luck in you,
> Will-o'-the-wisp, with a flicker of Puck in you,
> Wild as a bull-pup and all of his pluck in you,—
> Let a man tread on your coat and he'll see!—
> Eyes like the lakes of Killarney for clarity,
> Nose that turns up without any vulgarity,
> Smile like a cherub, and hair that is carroty,—
> Wow, you're a rarity, Barney McGee!
> Mellow as tarragon,
> Prouder than Arragon—
> Hardly a paragon,
> You will agree—
> Here's all that's fine to you!
> Books and old wine to you!
> Girls be divine to you,
> Barney McGee!

Swinburne, who in regard to technique must be allowed to speak with authority, went so far as to call English a language "to which all variations and combinations of anapestic, iambic or trochaic meter are as natural and pliable as all dactylic and spondaic forms are unnatural and abhorrent."[13] By this he probably meant a completely sustained

[13] Note preceding his translation of the Grand Chorus of Birds from Aristophanes. Campion (*Observations in the Art of English Poesie*) had expressed the same opinion of dactylics in 1602.

and distinctive dactylic movement. The writer of dactylics usually contents himself with the advantage he gains in the emphatic beginnings to his lines and allows the phrasing to swing the movement to anapestic, *e. g.*

> Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
> Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
> Heed not the corse, though a king's, in your path;
> Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!
> (Byron: *Song of Saul Before His Last Battle.*)

The strong stresses at the beginning and ending of each line have a greater force than the uninterrupted flow of triple rhythm in anapestics. If the cesuras come before stressed syllables, as in the fourth, fifth, and sixth lines of the following, the dactylic effect is further emphasized.

> Sea-king's daughter from over the sea,
> Alexandra!
> Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
> But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
> Alexandra!
> Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
> Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
> Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
> Scatter the blossom under her feet.
> (Tennyson: *A Welcome to Alexandra.*)

Swinburne has phrased his hexameter lines in the same way, with pauses before stresses in the first stanza of his *Song of the Standard:*

> Maiden most beautiful, mother most bountiful, lady of
> lands,
> Queen and republican, crowned of the centuries whose
> years are thy sands,
> See for thy sake what we bring to thee, Italy, here in
> our hands.

In some of the later stanzas, on the other hand, the cesuras throw the phrasing into anapestic movement:

Art thou not better than all men? and where shall she
turn but to thee?
Lo, not a breath, not a beam, not a beacon from mid-
land to sea;
Freedom cries out for a sign among nations, and none
will be free.

Tennyson's *Defense of Lucknow*, in the same meter, is one of the finest examples of the movement in English. The phrasing here, too, allows the line in most cases to swing toward the anapestic. The exceptions are lines meant to stand out as especially emphatic.

Mention has already been made of the rhythmic difficulties for the reader of Browning's *Master Hugues*, where the poet depends upon the force of the established dactylic movement to overcome the phrasing of such lines as,

In strikes a Fourth, a Fifth thrusts in his nose.

or,

Bid One, Two, Three, Four, Five clear the arena.[14]

Browning is here treating the dactylic movement as one must treat certain of the more difficult Latin and Greek rhythms in English experiments. The rhythm must be consciously in the reader's mind all the while and the words more or less forced into the rhythm.

I should call Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* another poem in which the dactylic movement is intended to override the phrasing. But in this case the conflicts are not in danger of upsetting all regular pattern as they do in some of the Browning lines, but merely allow the reader, if he prefers, to make a change in the pattern. Most people begin the poem as dactylic dimeter:

| Half a league, | half a league,
| Half a league | onward,

[14] | In strikes a | Fourth, a Fifth | thrusts in his | nose.
| Bid One, Two, | Three, Four, Five | clear the a- | rena.

and keep the refrain line in the same meter:

| Rode the six | hundred;

but read the lines with important final syllables as trimeter:

| All in the | valley of | Death,

and,

| "Forward the | Light Bri- | gade!
| Charge for the | guns! " he | said.

But Tennyson probably intended that all the lines should be dimeter. The final syllables he made important in order to avoid the jingle of perfect triple rimes which spoils Hood's poem in this meter and rhythm. One might slight these syllables in reading, and by keeping the lines consistently dimeter give a more appropriate galloping rhythm, *e. g.*

| Forward, the | Light Brigade!
| Was there a | man dismay'd?
| Not tho' the | soldier knew
| Someone had | blunder'd:
| Theirs not to | make reply,
| Theirs not to | reason why,
| Theirs but to | do and die:
| Into the | valley of Death
| Rode the six | hundred.

CHAPTER XVIII

Duple-triple Rhythms[1]

iambic-anapestic and trochaic-dactylic

If one prefers to consider the single foot the basis for discussions of rhythm, one will call the line,

The sound of the hollow sea's release,

iambic with the variation of a single trisyllabic foot; and the line,

In the night's retreat from the gathering frost,

anapestic with the variation of a single dissyllabic foot. If, however, one prefers to consider the whole line as the basis—or still better, the movement characteristic of a group of lines, as the basis for discussions of rhythm—one feels the need of a third classification, iambic-anapestic, to describe the verses just quoted. Each would fit perfectly as a slight variant in a poem whose rhythmic norm is the movement which each approaches. But they also fit perfectly together in the same poem:

The crickets mourning their comrades lost,
In the night's retreat from the gathering frost;

(Or is it their slogan, plaintive and shrill,
As they beat in their corselets, valiant still?)

. . . . . .

(O leaves, O leaves, I am one with you,
Of the mould and the sun and the wind and the dew!)

[1] *See* also Chapter V.

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;
And two brown arms at the journey's end!

These are the joys of the open road—
For him who travels without a load.
(Bliss Carman: *Joys of the Road.*)

Evidently the rhythmic "tune" of this poem is something different from the regular duple or regular triple considered in the previous chapters. The norm here is a free combination of time divisions composed of either two or three syllables.

This term duple-triple is not merely a convenient pigeonhole in which to place all the poems that cannot be described as either duple or triple in rhythm; it is a necessary division for such poems as Shelley's *Cloud,* and Swinburne's *Seaboard,* or his *Swimmer's Dream,* the music of which comes from a technique different from that of the other rhythms.[2]

[2] The dividing line which separates duple-triple rhythm from the two rhythms which it approaches is quite hazy. Simple verses like

The sound of the hollow sea's release,

or,

In the night's retreat from the gathering frost,

may be introduced into the regular rhythms occasionally, but when a variation is constantly repeated it establishes a new rhythmic norm. In general, we may consider that a proportion of one or more trisyllabic feet to four dissyllabic in a passage of verse will give a duple-triple rhythm. (*See* Chap. IV, p. 37.) Duple-triple rhythm usually has a greater proportion of dissyllabic feet than trisyllabic. Triple rhythm can apparently be varied much more than duple without suggesting a new rhythmic pattern to the ear. The question of just at what point either duple or triple rhythm becomes duple-triple is perhaps not important, but the special recognition of this mixed rhythm and its characteristic possibilities is quite significant.

The duple-triple was the latest of all the important rhythms to be developed, although the early history of our versification would lead one to expect it to be among the first. When foreign influence brought the duple rhythm into English verse, it was accepted in a very rough form. The English ear accustomed to the irregular native rhythm did not demand smooth iambics. The verse of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries admitted considerable variation, and the freedom of the metrical romances of that period was continued later in the versification of the ballads. The fact that the ballads were sung doubtless allowed them to fall into the extremely rough state in which many of them have come down to us. Not infrequently the roughness amounts to a duple-triple rather than a duple rhythm for a whole stanza, *e. g.*

> It was in and about the Martinmas time,
> When the green leaves were a-falling,
> That Sir John Graeme in the West Country,
> Fell in love with Barbara Allan.
> (*Bonny Barbara Allan.*)

The verse of a few of the miracle plays is a tumbling rhythm smoothed into a duple-triple, or, as in the *Second Shepherds' Play*, a fairly even triple. And duple-triple seems to be what Skelton is driving at sometimes. But like the straight triple rhythm it had no recognized place with the Elizabethans, except in a few songs. Chappell[3] cites a number of these that were sung to the Jacobean tune of *Hunting the Hare*—songs in a rhythm of two syllable and three syllable feet arranged in a tuneful pattern; and Gay's *Beggars' Opera* has this one, which seems to sing itself even without the music:

> If the heart of a man is depress'd with cares,
> The mist is dispell'd, when woman appears;

[3] *Op. cit.*, 1: 320 ff

Like the notes of a fiddle, she sweetly, sweetly,
Raises the spirits, and charms our ears.
Roses and lilies her cheeks disclose,
But her ripe lips are more sweet than those.
Press her,
Caress her,
With blisses,
Her kisses
Dissolve us in pleasure and soft repose.

Songs in this varied rhythm, however, are not common even in the eighteenth century when anapestics were extremely popular. And wherever they do occur they seem to have been written to a tune.

Blake, who wrote a number of poems apparently on the principle of musical equivalence, in a few places fell into a duple-triple rhythm. The second stanza of the *Nurses' Song*, which antedates *Christabel* by eight years, he wrote in a rhythm which Coleridge thought he himself had invented; and the *Laughing Song* is in the style of duple-triple rhythm which became extremely common in the nineteenth century, *e. g.*

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it.

To Coleridge, however, must be given the credit of definitely placing duple-triple among recognized modern English rhythms. *Christabel* is written chiefly in octosyllabics, but with a frequent variation of duple-triple and triple lines. Except in a few Cowleian odes and in Blake's *Nurse's Song*, this deliberate blending of different rhythms in the same poem had not been used since Spenser's experim nts in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. The most discussed part of the poem is the opening, already quoted (p. 163). This is written on the principle of duple-triple rhythm, a

musical equivalence of time divisions, with a free variation of from two to three syllables to each. Coleridge probably got his idea for this from the rough rhythm of some of the ballads. His *Ancient Mariner*, which was written in the same year (1797), has a few passages in the rhythm.[4]

Even before *Christabel* was printed its influence began to be felt. Some passages in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*[5] are in a similar rhythm, and in the same poem the *Lay of Rosabelle* concludes with two stanzas in it. Then there were other ballad imitations like Southey's *Well of St. Keyne.* Shelley after a few early trials[6] showed of what wonderful musical effects duple-triple rhythm was capable by using it for his *Cloud.* Hogg's *Kilmeny* and Charles Wolf's *Burial of Sir John Moore* followed not long after. All through the rest of the century the rhythm continued to be used for almost every kind of poem. The many varieties of its music were discovered and developed by Tennyson, Longfellow, Swinburne, Kipling, Lanier, Alfred Noyes, Henry Newbolt, and dozens more of their contemporaries. To show the varied possibilities of the rhythm, mention may be made of the following poems widely different in theme, style and meter:—Tennyson's *Wreck, Vastness,*

---

[4] Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.

[5] Quoted above, p. 171.

[6] *Marianne's Dream* (1817) strongly recalls the rhythm of *Christabel*, especially the xvith stanza:

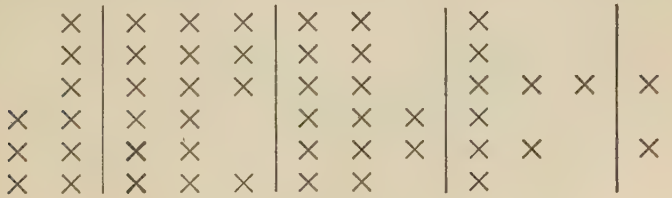
The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven through the chasms about and about,
Between the peaks so desolate
Of the drowning mountains, in and out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails—
While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

and *Revenge;* Browning's *Up at a Villa;* Swinburne's *Mater Dolorosa, Forsaken Garden,* and *Armada;* Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride* and *Killed at the Ford;* Kipling's *Tomlinson, The Mary Gloster,* and *Conundrum of the Workshops;* Lanier's *Song of the Chattahoochie* and *Marsh Song—at Sunset;* and Alfred Noyes's *Eurydice, Oxford Revisited,* and *Bacchus and the Pirates.*

The characteristic which distinguishes duple-triple from the other verse rhythms is its likeness to the rhythm of music; it so clearly depends upon time equivalence. The variation in the flow of duple rhythm consists in subtle departures from a very fixed norm—departures much less obvious than the varying rhythmic flow from measure to measure, which is allowable in a musical tune. The duple-triple approaches more nearly this freedom of musical rhythm, and its variations, more conspicuous than those of duple, do not depend so much upon the ear of the individual reader. In the following stanza from Tennyson's *Maud* the first two lines are the only ones that are parallel in rhythm and meter, and the flow of the whole six lines is never dissyllabic or trisyllabic for more than two feet in succession:

> All night have the roses heard
> The flute, violin, bassoon;
> All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
> To the dancers dancing in tune;
> Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
> And a hush with the setting moon.

A scansion scheme for the passage may make it easier to analyze the rhythm.



Poems written in a varied rhythmic pattern like this gain a special tuneful effect.

This rhythm has not only the freest variation, but also permits the most natural phrasing of all rhythms except that of *vers libre*. The stanza just quoted from *Maud* has no light stresses in it. There is seldom a need for them in duple-triple, which may easily accept the rhythm of most prose phrases. In fact, it is so important in this irregular rhythm that the poet make his intention evident at the first reading, that light stresses are best avoided except where there can be no possible question of rhythmic ambiguity. This adherence to the cadences of prose means that the duple-triple rhythm has much less opportunity for that struggle between the movement and the phrasing, which is one of the characteristics of duple rhythm at its best. For this reason a subtle ear may find more pleasure in the latter than in the former. On the other hand, the duple-triple seems to me to have a great advantage over the triple in that it does not have the inevitably regular recurrence of the strong beat which tends toward monotony in long anapestic poems.

The two movements in duple-triple rhythm may be exemplified and contrasted in the two passages that follow.

Iambic-anapestic:

> The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
> To the low last edge of the long lone land.
> If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
> Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
> (Swinburne: *A Forsaken Garden.*)

Trochaic-dactylic:

> Sunset softened the crags of the mountain,
> Silence melted the hunter's heart,
> Only the sob of a falling fountain
> Pulsed in a deep ravine apart.
> (Alfred Noyes: *Actaeon.*)

These two movements have the same relation to each other that anapestic and dactylic have. Practically everything that was said in the last chapter of the relation of those movements will hold true here. Because the genius of the language leans more toward rising than toward falling rhythm the trochaic-dactylic is less stable, and in the longer meters swings easily into the iambic-anapestic, unless reinforced by the impulse of a cesura which gives the effect of a direct attack in the middle of the line. It keeps its individuality best in short meters, where the frequent recurrence of the direct attack gives the constant strong emphasis which we found characteristic of dactylic poems in dimeter or trimeter. The two movements of this mixed rhythm are very commonly used together in the same poem—again like the anapestic and dactylic. The trochaic-dactylic movement, however, does not occur alone as often as the dactylic. In fact, poems written throughout in trochaic-dactylic are comparatively rare in English. Aside from one or two light poems of Hood and Praed, the movement was not recognized as separable from the iambic-anapestic until Swinburne, doubtless influenced by the classic logaœdic rhythms, used it for several poems in his later volumes—notably the *Swimmer's Dream*, *England—an Ode*, and parts of his *Armada*. Later came Kipling's *Song of the English*, partly in trochaic-dactylic; and eight or ten of Alfred Noyes's pieces.

Both movements of duple-triple rhythm occur in a wide variety of meters and stanza forms. Frequently they are used in dimeter, both with and without rime. Many of these dimeter poems, like Byron's *Could Love Forever* and Francis Mahony's *Bells of Shandon*, are made up of lines that considered individually are chiefly duple in rhythm, but the use of light endings combined with an unstressed initial syllable in the following line throws the whole poem into a duple-triple rhythm, *e. g.*

With deep affection,
And recollection,
I often think of
  Those Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would,
In the days of childhood,
Fling around my cradle
  Their magic spells.[7]

When duple-triple dimeter is unrimed it has an archaic, semi-barbaric manner, an imitation or revival of an early middle English rhythm. Tennyson first tried this in his translation of the *Battle of Brunenburgh*, and later in *Merlin and the Gleam:*

O young Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying.
I am Merlin
Who follow the Gleam.

In these shorter meters the question of whether a line has either one or two syllables before the first stress, or begins with direct attack, or whether it has a strong, or weak, or double weak ending are of special importance, for these matters help considerably in determining the particular character of the verse tune. In the very long meters these extra syllables occur so far apart that they appear less prominent. They count especially in the rhythmic scheme of Shelley's *Cloud* because the use of internal rimes divides the tetrameters into dimeters:

[7] Compare the similar means of gaining an anapestic effect in the dimeter of Byron's *When We Two Parted*, and Poe's *For Annie*. *See* above, p. 284.

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
  From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
  In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
  The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
  As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
  And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
  And laugh as I pass in thunder.

The peculiar qualities of the duple-triple rhythm—its musical effect and the range of its tune—may be studied by a comparison of two stanzas from the same poem. I have chosen two stanzas from Swinburne's *Triumph of Time*, one from near the beginning and one near the end, in the same meter, with the same rime scheme, and both duple-triple:

The loves and hours of the life of a man,
  They are swift and sad, being born of the sea.
Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,
  Born with a man's breath, mortal as he;
Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,
Weeds of the wave without fruit upon earth.
I lose what I long for, save what I can,
  My love, my love, and no love for me!

I shall never be friends again with roses;
  I shall loath sweet tunes, where a note grown strong
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,
  As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,
Face to face with its own desire;
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes;
  I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

Here is a scansion scheme for these stanzas:

× The	× × loves and	× × × hours of the	× × × life of a	× man,
× ×	× ×	×, × ×	× × ×	×.
	× × ×	× × ×	× × ×	×,
	× × ×	× ^×,	× × ×	×;
	× × ×	× × ×	× ×	×,
	× × ×	×, × ×	× × ×	×.
×	× × ×	× ×,	× × ×	×,
×	×, ×	×, × ×	× ×	×.
× × I shall	× × × never be	× × friends a	× × gain with	× × roses;
× ×	× ^×	×, × ×	× ^×	×
×	× × ×	×, ×	× ×	× ×,
× ×	× × ×	× ×	× ×	×.
× ×	× × ×	× ×	× ×	×,
	× ×	× × ×	× ×	×;
× ×	× × ×	× × ×	× × ×	× ×;
× ×	× ×	× × ×	× ^×	×.

If we disregard the pauses at the ends of the lines and consider the rhythm continuous, we find about the same number of trisyllabic feet in both stanzas, but they are differently distributed. The most marked difference is in the third foot of each line. In the first stanza quoted, six out of eight lines have a trisyllabic third foot and the fourth foot is always monosyllabic (*i. e.* all the lines have strong endings). In the second stanza seven out of the eight lines have a dissyllabic third foot, and three of the lines have light endings. These differences in the last two feet of most of the lines make the chief contrast in the tune of the two stanzas. There are also contrasts in the way the lines begin. The first stanza has four with direct attack, *i. e.* there is a blending of trochaic-dactylic with the iambic-anapestic movement; the second stanza is characterized by a swing

of two syllables preceding the first stress in six lines out of the eight. With this contrast before him in the tunes of two stanzas of the same poem, the reader may see how extremely varied the music of duple-triple rhythm may be.

Further illustrations of the varieties of this rhythm may be found in Kipling. He has discovered many ways of bringing out its possibilities. Two poems, the *Ballad of the King's Jest* and the *Ballad of Bo da Thone,* are very close in pattern, both tetrameter couplets and both duple-triple—but with a slight difference in tune. The first line of the former is,

When spring-time flushes the desert grass,

with a single trisyllabic ripple in the middle. The majority of the lines are of this type, though there are many with the ripple in another place and many with two ripples. The other poem likewise announces its characteristic tune in the first line,

Bo da Thone was a warrior bold,

the rhythm of which, more trisyllabic than the lines of the *King's Jest,* is repeated very often, until, toward the end of the poem, the rhythm turns into unvaried anapestics. Nearly all the rhythms in one poem are to be found in the other, but the largest proportion in each follows the type of its first line.

Again, compare these two poems in hexameter:

One from the ends of the earth—gifts at an open door
Treason has much, but we, Mother, Thy sons have more!
From the whine of a dying man, from the snarl of a wolf-pack freed,
Turn, for the world is Thine. Mother be proud of thy seed!
(*Song of the English.*)

And Ung looked down at his deerskins—their broad shell-tasselled bands—
And Ung drew downward his mitten and looked at his naked hands.

And he gloved himself and departed, and he heard his father behind:
"Son that can see so clearly, rejoice that thy tribe is blind!"
(*Story of Ung.*)

The contrast in these tunes comes from the difference in the beginnings of the lines and in the type of the cesuras. The passage from the *Song of the English* is characterized (three out of the four lines) by direct attack and by a cesura separating two strong stresses. The movement is thus strongly trochaic-dactylic. The Story of Ung is in the opposite movement, and, following Kipling's usual practice in hexameter, always has the cesura between two unstressed syllables.

The *Conundrum of the Workshops* and *Tomlinson* are both in duple-triple heptameter, both have usually a cesura after the fourth stress, and both use internal rime occasionally. The difference in the rhythms is that *Tomlinson* has fewer trisyllabic feet and even frequent lines in straight iambic movement. This gives a different rhythmic feeling to each of the poems, though here again, some rhythms of each are to be found in the other.

Sometimes the feet in duple-triple rhythm are arranged with a regular variation like certain of the classic rhythms. In the second stanza of Moore's *Irish Peasant to his Mistress* (quoted below) the flow of the rhythm is checked and slowed by the two dissyllabic feet which regularly follow two trisyllabic. This, the pattern rhythm of the poem, is not kept so closely in the other two stanzas.

Thy | rival was | honor'd, while | Thou wert | wrong'd and | scorn'd;
Thy crown was of briers, while gold her brows adorn'd;
She woo'd me to temples, whilst Thou lay'st hid in caves;
Her friends were all masters, while Thine, alas! were slaves;
Yet cold in the earth, at thy feet, I would rather be
Than wed what I loved not, or turn one thought from Thee.

Swinburne's *Evening at Vichy* is composed of sixty-three pentameter lines with a trisyllabic ripple always in the third foot, *e. g.*

A | light has | passed that | never shall | pass a | way.

When a similar pattern is formed with tetrameter lines the greater prominence of the trisyllabic foot distinctly changes the character of the rhythm. Swinburne has a four line stanza made up of verses whose second foot is regularly trisyllabic. Poems written in this type of rhythm come as near to the flavor of classic poetry as accentual verse can. And when frequent spondaic phrasing is added, as in the following example, the resemblance is still closer:

As | trees that | stand in the | storm-wind | fast
She stands unsmitten of death's keen blast,
With strong remembrance of sunbright spring
Alive at heart to the lifeless last.
(*On the Death of Richard Burton.*)

An eight-line stanza with a similar pattern in the trochaic-dactylic movement opens the exquisitely musical *Swimmer's Dream:*

Dawn is | dim on the | dark soft | water,
Soft and passionate, dark and sweet.
Love's own self was the deep sea's daughter,
Fair and flawless from face to feet,
Hailed of all when the world was golden,
Loved of lovers whose names beholden
Thrill men's eyes as with light of olden
Days more glad than their flight was fleet.

After six stanzas composed on this pattern come two stanzas in long trochaics, then four in iambics, and finally a return to the rhythmic pattern of the opening part with the movement changed to iambic-anapestic. Another of Swinburne's remarkable rhythmic tunes is produced by doubling the line which composes the stanza just quoted and embellishing it with internal rimes:

Sea and strand, and a lordlier land than sea-tides rolling and rising sun

Clasp and lighten in climes that brighten with day when day that was here is done,
Call aloud on their children, proud with trust that future and past are one.

(*England: An Ode.*)

Swinburne used this same difficult rhythm for two more poems, the *Birthday Ode* (1891) and the *Threnody*.

These illustrations will suffice to show what musical effects may be produced by intricately woven patterns of duple-triple rhythm. But an analysis of Swinburne's great examples in these patterns reveals so consummate a mastery as to discourage the thought of future developments. Poems written in such rigid form are not very common in English. They are not only difficult to do, but they have a certain artificiality, which, though it may charm the ear attuned to classic poetry, almost inevitably distracts the attention from the qualities of the poem other than the rhythmical.

The greater number of poems in duple-triple rhythm are freely varied, with a natural and easy phrasing. Browning, for example, has dozens of them in the shorter meters. And some poets have felt that the genius of the rhythm lies in this freedom of phrasing. They have consequently made the rhythm vary with the changes in thought. They have combined different meters and movements in the same poem, and often have blended the duple-triple with straight duple and straight triple. Tennyson's *Revenge* is one of the finest of this type of poem. The opening line,

At | Flores | in the A- | zores Sir | Richard | Grenvill | lay,

announces the rhythm in which it is chiefly written. From the third stanza on, changes in meter are introduced. There are trimeters, pentameters, and heptameters used to vary the hexameter base; there are even one or two dimeters. The tenth and fourteenth stanzas have a pentameter base, and the ninth is in heptameters. And the rhythm changes as well as the meter; it becomes more trisyllabic in some

stanzas, returns to the rhythmic motive of the opening line, and concludes in anapestics. Here are two of the stanzas which have departed considerably from the rhythmic and metrical scheme upon which the poem is chiefly built:

VII

And while | now the | great San | Philip | hung a- | bove us | like a | cloud
Whence the thunder bolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And | two u- | pon the | larboard and | two u- | pon the | starboard | lay,
And the | battle | thunder | broke | from them | all.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

Tennyson here, as always, is careful of his punctuation. His pauses are not merely for the sake of grammar, but are a part of the rhythmic effect. The unpunctuated continuity of the second line in the ninth stanza contrasts with the divided rhythm of the next three.

Arnold's *Forsaken Merman* is another poem in which different meters and rhythms are most musically combined. The feeling that pervades the first third of it is trochaic, freely blended with suggestions of trochaic-dactylic. The poem begins:

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shorewards blow;
Now the salt tides seawards flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away.
This way, this way.

This stanza may be described as a blending of trochaic-dactylic with a trochaic movement which is freely phrased with long and extra accented syllables. Some of the lines I should scan thus:

| Come, dear | children, | let us a- | way . . .
4 2 4 2 2 2 2 4

| Now the | great winds | shorewards | blow;
4 2 3 3 3 3 4

| Now the | salt tides | seawards | flow . . .
4 2 3 3 3 3 4

| Children dear, | let us a- | way.
2 2 2 2 2 2 4

| This way, | this way |.
3 3 3 3

The stanza that follows is more purely trochaic than the first, except for the line,

| "Margaret! | Margaret!"

which occurs twice.

The third and fourth stanzas use trisyllabic variation more freely. Lines like,

And the | little gray | church on the | windy | shore,

and,

| Feed in the | ooze of their | pasture- | ground,

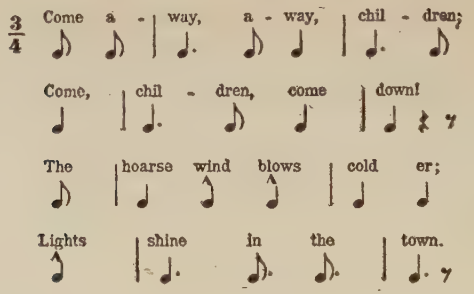
anticipate the triple rhythm toward which the poem is tending. But trochaic lines with long syllables continue to make part of the rhythm, *e. g.*

| Where great | whales come | sailing | by.
3 3 3 3 3 3 4

The fifth stanza, after the first three lines, runs into an iambic-anapestic rhythm which has more triple than duple feet. Two of the lines are pure anapestics. Here is the whole stanza.

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea.
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with Thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves.
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

The next stanza is much in the same movement. But after that comes a more irregular stanza, the chief meter of which is trimeter. This is a transition to the new meter and rhythm of the last two stanzas of the poem. These are in anapestic dimeter, as I should read them, and are phrased in a way to give a peculiarly individual music. A possible scansion in musical notation, which has its advantages here, would be this:



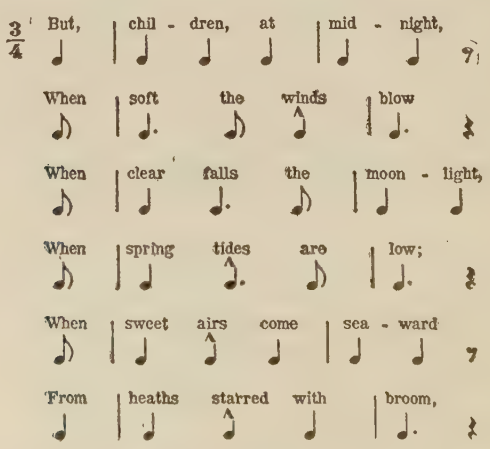
The third line here,

The hoarse wind blows colder,

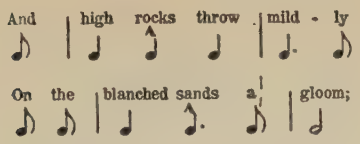
phrased with heavy and extra accented syllables, anticipates the rhythm of several lines in the final stanza, *e. g.*

When sweet airs come seaward.

This final stanza is in an almost regular triple rhythm, but it contains ten or more phrases of a rhythm like that of the expression *The winds blow*,[8] which make the stanza unique in its verse tune. Here is the reading I should give it:



[8] In classical scansion called a Bacchius, ⏑ — —



Up the still glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
  And then come back down,
Singing, "There dwells a lov'd one,
But cruel is she.
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

CHAPTER XIX

Free Verse or Vers Libre

The history of every art shows periods of revolt from conventionalities, from standards, and even from laws. Critical wars have been waged over poetic diction, verse forms have been worn out by the poets and dropped from use, and rhythms which one age eyed askance as innovations, another has later scorned as dully old-fashioned. At present the poets are engaged in one more of these quarrels over form—this time as to how much form is necessary, or, in fact, whether any is necessary at all.

This recent development of free verse is a natural reaction following the kind of poetry written between 1880 and 1910. The successors of Tennyson and Swinburne constituted a group of poets of as high a degree of technical skill in difficult fixed rhythms and meters as any period can show. A radical change in type was to be expected. And this prosodic revolt is made more prominent by the fact that along with it has developed a revolt toward an absolute realism in point of view and in diction. The adherents of the old and of the new schools belabor one another with words.

One side claims that fixed forms are monotonous, and that all possibilities of further development in them have been exhausted; the other side claims that vers libre is utterly without art, that it is the refuge of the lazy poet. Both sides present as proof of their points the most execrable examples of the type they wish to villify; when one writer condemns all vers libre by quoting some silly eccentricity, a vers librist retorts with "Mary had a little lamb."

It seems hardly necessary for the present author to defend fixed verse from the charge of obviousness and monotony

of rhythm after he has written a book on its infinite possibilities and subtle variations. And on the other hand, though much free verse is the result of mere laziness, or crudeness of technique, to condemn the type indiscriminately means to deny a place in poetic art to forms highly developed by Arnold, Patmore, Henley, Whitman, Blake, and the translators of the Psalter. Both the fixed and the free types of verse will undoubtedly go on existing side by side, and as new singers arise they will discover new capabilities in both for embodying the new aspects of life they have to present.

Whether the poet chooses a fixed or a free manner of expression will depend upon his mood or upon his habitual way of thought. The notion that free verse is a more natural form of expression, and therefore easier to write than fixed verse is, I think, a fallacy. The difficulty in composition which free verse presents is that it does not force the poet to contemplate his thought with an intensity which brings out its fullest possibilities, and which at the same time rejects its superfluous fringes. Great free verse can be written only by a mind capable of concentration and of self-criticism. The danger of too much freedom is that poetry may easily become the mere jotting down of very casual thoughts in haphazard rhythm. The first form in which an idea comes to a poet is just the material for a poem; if he allows himself complete freedom of expression he is tempted to leave the thought undeveloped, so that he does not bring out all the poetry and feeling the theme really can inspire in him. A comparison of some of Emerson's poems with the first drafts of them in his notebooks, makes an interesting study in the development of a poetic idea through the requirement of form. Here is a passage from *Seashore*, which is improved in both rhythm and thought:

> Was ever couch so magnificent as mine? Lie down on my warm ledges and learn that a very little hut is all you need. I have made this architecture superfluous, and it is paltry beside mine.

> Was ever couch magnificent as mine
> Lie down on the warm rock-ledges and there learn
> A little hut suffices like a town.
> I make your sculptured architecture vain,
> Vain beside mine. I drive my wedges home,
> And carve the coastwise mountain into caves.

A great deal of recent work seems to me to be merely hints and suggestions, first drafts, that would not appear so trivial if the poets had developed the significance of these hints. The beginner in poetic composition will find the demands of rigid form an actual help to his development. In the process of fulfilling the requirements of fixed meters and rime schemes he will turn over in mind many phrases for the expression of his thought, and when he has acquired a facility he will find a way to use the best of these phrases. Arnold, Henley, Patmore and Whitman wrote in the fixed forms before they tried free rhythms; and the young poet had better learn to sail his boat in the sheltered harbors of the quatrain or sonnet before he ventures out in the treacherous sea of vers libre. I do not wish to argue that the forms of fixed verse are necessary for the development of poetic thought, but that some kind of form is. Free verse is a most musical vehicle for the expression of the poet's feeling, as Arnold, Henley and Whitman have shown; but with these masters there were always in view certain standards guiding their changes in rhythm.

The metrist, however, finds a greater difficulty in formulating principles for free verse than he does for the fixed types, because the very nature of free verse makes its form a matter which varies with each individual poem. In no other type of expression is the truism, that form must be in perfect correspondence with thought, quite so true. But poets and readers and critics rarely agree as to whether in any given case this perfect accord has been attained. The metrist can merely give a few hints to the vers librist, scarcely anything that may be called principles. The poets

themselves who, like Miss Amy Lowell and Mr. John Gould Fletcher, have written of their art form, insist that there are laws guiding free verse rhythms, but they are extremely vague about these laws and do not commit themselves by exact statements and pointed illustrations.

In the fifth chapter of this book, in which we discussed the differences between prose, rhythmical prose, free verse and fixed verse, a distinction was drawn between free verse that is irregular in meter only, and free verse that is irregular in both meter and rhythm. Verse that is free from a fixed metrical norm and that may also be free from rime we may call the Arnold type of vers libre—a type which developed from the English Pindaric ode and from imitated choruses of the Greek dramatists. This kind of vers libre Milton used for the famous choruses in *Samson Agonistes*, Arnold in half a dozen of his best known poems, Patmore in his *Angel in the House*, and Henley in *Hawthorne and Lavender*. Verse that is free from a fixed meter and from a definite rhythmical pattern we may call the Whitman type of vers libre. This type, as was shown in chapter five, is, except for the manner of printing, identical with rhythmical prose, from which, in fact, it apparently developed. This is the free verse of the English Psalter, McPherson's *Ossian*, Blake's prophetic books, Henley's *London Voluntaries*, and most of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

This distinction in type of *vers libre* according to the degree of freedom which it follows, is not especially important except for the fact that the Arnold type is close enough to fixed verse to maintain the struggle between the phrasing and the underlying established rhythm—the struggle of forces which brings about variety in all kinds of fixed verse; the Whitman type, being practically the same as rhythmical prose, gains its variety through changes in the rhythm itself. The modern vers librists write in either type, according to the degree of freedom they desire.

Two of the finest poems of the type which holds to an

underlying rhythmic norm are Arnold's *Strayed Reveller* and *Philomela.* These are, except in one or two places, unrimed; the lines constantly vary in length; the stanzas are irregular in length and structure; but the rhythm is not free. Here is the whole of *Philomela:*

Hark! ah the Nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! Hark—what pain!

O Wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—

Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou tonight behold
Here through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb Sister's shame?

Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal Passion
Eternal Pain!

The sense of structure in this poem comes from the correspondence of the thought phrases with the line lengths, from the parallel phrases and rhythms and from the climactic arrangement of longer lines leading up to three short ones at the close. A definite rhythmical pattern is felt through the poem, for a third of the lines are familiar variations of the iambic pentameter and the rest are short lines with no unusual departures from the iambic.

The coincidence of line and phrasing which Arnold carries out in *Philomela* and in the greater part of the *Strayed Reveller* is important in free verse of either of the two types we have distinguished. A struggle between the thought phrase and the meter cannot be perceived by the ear unless there is a regularly expected line length, *i. e.*, there is nothing gained by making the sense run over the line in vers libre.

For instance, is there any point at all in the following line division?

> From Bundle's Opera House in the village
> To Broadway is a great step,
> But I tried to take it, my ambition fired
> When sixteen years of age
> Seeing "East Lynne" played here in the village
> By Ralph Barrett, the coming
> Romantic actor, who enthralled my soul.

If the lines of verse are to have any existence as successive rhythmic units they must be made evident either by expected repetition of meter, or by rime, or by phrasing which makes them clearly units.

Always in free verse one should feel that there is some reason for the line division. Just as one avoids the monotony of many successive short phrases in prose style, so free verse gains by variety in phrase lengths. For example, the following choppy and abrupt phrasing does not seem to me suitable for the theme:

Opposite my window,
The moon cuts,
Clear and round,
Through the plum-coloured night.
She cannot light the city;
It is too bright.
It has white lamps,
And glitters coldly.

A finer effect may be gained by a climactic arrangement of lines, several long sweeps of phrases ending with short striking ones, or several short ones rounded out with the finality which long phrases give. Such arrangements are worth working for; they add a sense of structure to the poem or stanza. Henley, in *Hawthorne and Lavender*, has varied his line lengths most successfully, and, in the following example made the structure clear by an arrangement of interwoven rimes:

Where, in what other life,
Where, in what old, spent star,
Systems ago, dead vastitudes afar,
Were we two bird and bough, or man and wife?
Or wave and spar?
Or I the beating sea, and you the bar
On which it breaks? I know not, I!
But this, O this, my very dear I know;
Your voice awakes old echoes in my heart;
And things I say to you now are said once more;
And, sweet, when we two part,
I feel I have seen you falter and linger so,
So hesitate, and turn, and cling,—yet go,
As once in some innumerable Before,
Once on some fortunate yet thrice-blasted shore,
Was it for good?
O, these poor eyes are wet;
And yet, O yet,
Now that we know, I would not, if I could,
Forget.

The same principle of variation in line length is evident throughout Whitman's use of free rhythms. He is particularly fond of long sweeping reaches. In the following passage from the *Mystic Trumpeter* the lines vary in length from five to eleven time parts (as I read them), the longer lines broken by cesuras into a rhythmic ebb and flow:

Blow again, Trumpeter! and for my sensuous eyes,
Bring the old pageants—show the feudal world,
What charm thy music works—thou makest pass before me,
Ladies and cavaliers long dead—barons are in their castle halls—the Troubadours are singing;
Armed knights go forth to redress wrongs—some in quest of the Holy Grail:
I see the tournament—I see the contestants, encased in heavy armor, seated on stately champing horses;
I hear the shouts—the sound of blows and smiting steel:
I see the Crusaders' tumultuous armies—Hark how the cymbals clang!
Lo! where the monks walk in advance, bearing the cross on high!

Not only are these lines varied in length, but each line is a thought-phrase. The form of this poem is in correspondence with the ideas expressed.

This correspondence, too, appears in the changes in rhythm. Whitman here has shown his own type of free verse to the greatest advantage, for it is in possibilities of rhythmic change that the advantage consists. The spirited beginning of the passage just quoted seems to me to have the rhythm of a trumpet call:

Blow a- | gain, | trumpeter!

The next four lines leave the triple rhythm for a somewhat varied duple, which seems to move slower than the triple. The two parallel phrases of the sixth line have a parallel rhythm:

I | see the | tournament—
I | see the | contestants,—

which is echoed later in the triple rhythm of the line,

I | see the Cru- | saders' tu- | multuous | armies—| Hark!
how the | cymbals | clang!

The peculiar rhythm of the last line of the passage is very suggestive of a stately walk:

| Lo! where the | monks | walk in ad- | vance, | bearing the
| cross on | high!

Changes in rhythm indicating changes in thought and, wherever possible, rhythms directly suggestive of the thought, are effects to be sought after in writing vers libre. Mr. John Gould Fletcher, who has emphasized in one of his prefaces the importance of this point, sometimes exemplifies it admirably, as for instance—

The rolling and the tossing of the sides of immense pavilions
Under the whirling wind that screams up the cloudless sky,

and again,

Like cataracts that crash from a crumbling crag
Into the dull-blue smouldering gulf of a lake below.

Suggestive rhythmic change ought to be one of the characteristic qualities of the freer type of vers libre, but most of the recent poets seem to me to have succeeded in it but indifferently well. This suggestiveness may be gained in other ways than the mere obvious imitation of sound or movement. A sudden change in the rhythm may have the effect of italicizing the thought in the new rhythm, so that the thought becomes more vivid. The two changes in the rhythm of the following lines from Henley are, I think, very suggestive, but they might emphasize other effects quite as well if given to another thought in a different context.

The River, jaded and forlorn,
Welters and wanders wearily—wretchedly on;

Yet in and out among the ribs
Of the old skeleton bridge as in the piles
Of some dead lake-built city, full of skulls,
Worm-worn, rat-riddled, mouldy with memories . . .

Rhythm alone, whether in free verse or fixed, has no objective quality apart from association with the idea it expresses; it merely emphasizes and adds suggestion to the thought.

The theory of the vers librists is that the freedom of their form permits a wider use of expressive rhythmic effects, but in actual fact a reader will turn many pages of the recent volumes of verse before he finds a rhythm that stands out unmistakably as a perfect accord of form with thought. Imitative and suggestive rhythms actually occur more frequently in the fixed verse forms of Tennyson than in any of the modern vers librists. The reason for this lies not only in the greater genius of Tennyson, but in the fact that rhythmic changes are more prominent when they are felt as departures from an expected basic rhythm. For example, the rhythm of,

| First as in | fear, | step after | step, she | stole,
| Down the lông | tower | stairs | hesita- | tìng,
(Tennyson: *Launcelot and Elaine.*)

is suggestively wavering because the lines are phrased to bring out departures from the expected iambic norm of the blank verse context. If the line occurred in a context of free verse without any regular norm, the rhythm would not so obviously have the effect of wavering. The lesson which the vers librist may learn from this is to make two or three lines in an even rhythm directly precede a line whose suggestive irregularity he wishes to make conspicuous.

Of the other means besides rhythm, of bringing closer together the form and the thought, the tone-color of the phrases and passages is as important in free verse as in fixed, or as in fine prose. Here there is no difference in the principles guiding the writer of one form of expression or

another; chapter eight has already been devoted to this phase of technique. The writer of free verse has perhaps a special advantage in certain kinds of imitative effects. The following line from Mr. J. C. Underwood's *War Flames* very successfully combines a cumulative whirring of *z*'s and *m*'s with a long full sweep of rhythm:

> High in the sky through the mist that hides the stars comes a drumming of motors madly whirring in limbo.

To these somewhat scattered hints on technique should be added the point that good free verse ought to be distinctive in its form. It ought not to approach too closely to well recognized fixed forms lest it seem merely a careless and unfinished attempt at some other type of work. Poems that start as sonnets, but later introduce short lines or run over the fixed limits of the form, on the plea that they are vers libre, are to be deprecated. And so with blank verse with a metrical freedom which allows just enough trimeters or tetrameters to make the poem an unfortunate compromise. Accept the fixed forms as they are, or create a free form of your own, but do not make vers libre an excuse for evading difficulties. The poet should remember that the ears of his present readers are trained in the old types of fixed verse, and that whenever his work approaches these old types, some minor departure like the lack of a rime startles and disappoints us. The effect is not that of an interesting novelty, but of something crudely unfinished. An example may be found in the following quatrain where the unrimed last word of the stanza in the old accustomed "common meter" hits us like a blow:

> The days went by like shadows,
> The minutes wheeled like stars,
> She took the pity from my heart,
> And made it into smiles.

The freedom which leads to such unpleasant effects seems to me very unfortunate.

A good plan, I think, for the aspirant who wishes to write free verse, is to study the qualities of prose rhythms written by the masters of style. A careful analysis of passages of DeQuincey, Ruskin, Pater, or Stevenson would show much about the variation in length of phrase, frequent change in rhythm, the use of parallel rhythms, and of climax.[1]

I have tried to point out a few ways in which the new movement in verse may, by a study of the rhythms of Whitman, Henley, and writers of great prose, develop a finer sense of artistic effect. Free verse, like any other form of art, must have its principles. Haphazard expression without standards can never produce work of value. It will be a great pity for people who think their emotions interesting to feel that they can write poetry between the newspaper and breakfast, now that poetry is easier to do than it used to be. Unless the modern school develops some principles of length and flow of rhythms, and some sense of grouping, of climax,—of form, they will have only the temporary vogue of startling novelty.

[1] These points have been brought out in Chapter V.

INDEX

Accent, shifting, 17, 52
Alexandrine, 107, 159, 176, 185
Alliteration, 109
Amphibrach phrasing, 75, 79
Anapestic movement, 70
Anapestic phrasing, 75
Anapestic verse, 275
Assonance, 94

Ballade, 250
Blank verse, 196
Blank verse, lyrical, 140
Blank verse, rhythmic variation in, 203

Cesura, 29, 186
Cesuras in triple rhythm, 284
Cesuras in trochaic verse, 271
Cesuras, masculine and feminine, 220
Chant-royal, 157, 255
Christabel, meter of, 168, 299
Classical imitations, 44
Classical rhythms, 309
Common meter, 147
Connotation of words vs. tone-color, 132
Consonantal sequence, 114
Couplet, heroic, 182
Couplet, tetrameter, 162

Dactylic movement, 70
Dactylic phrasing, 75, 78
Dactylic verse, 275, 289
Dimeter, definition of, 13
Direct attack, 21
Duple rhythm, 33
Duple-triple rhythm, 33, 296

Eight line stanzas, 158
Elision, 29
Emphasis, 11
Emphasis, definition of, 13
Enjambment, 182, 187, 191, 216
Extra accent, definition of, 13
Extra accent, examples of, 14

Feet, monosyllabic, 22
Feet of five syllables, 24
Feet of four syllables, 23
Feminine cesura, 31
Feminine rimes, 83, 90
Five line stanza, 154
Foot, definition of, 13
Free verse, 65, 316
French forms, 247

Heptameter, definition of, 13
Heroic couplet, 182
Heroic quatrain, 151
Heroic tetrameter, 180
Hexameter, definition of, 13
Hovering stress, 203, 214
Hudibrastic couplets, 167

Iambic-anapestic movement, 70
Iambic-anapestic verse, 296
Iambic movement, 70
Iambic phrasing, 75, 78
Imitative sounds, 106
In Memoriam stanza, 148

Kyrielle, 265

Lai, 265
Latin verse, equivalence in, 10
Light ending, 21
Light stress, definition of, 13
Light stresses, 199
Light stresses in triple rhythm, 280
Line, as a unit in verse, 8
Logaoedic movement, 71, 303
Long meter, 147
Long vowels, effect of, 126

Masculine cesura, 31
Masculine rimes, 83
Melody in verse, 96
Meter, 6
Meter, ambiguous, 43
Meter, definition of, 8
Monosyllabic feet, 22
Movement, falling, 69
Movement, rising, 69
Musical measure, division of, 11
Musical notation of verse, 26, 314

Nine syllable lines, 40

Occasional verse, 189
Octameter, 30
Octameter, definition of, 13
Octave, 223
Octosyllabic couplet, 163
Ode, 230
Odes, choric, 244
Odes, irregular, 240
Odes, regular pindaric, 237
Odes, stanzaic, 233
Omar stanza, 151
Onomatopoeia, 105
Ottava rima, 159

Pantoum, 265
Paragraph structure in poetry, 139
Pattern, metrical, 42
Pattern, verse, 32, 51
Pentameter, definition of, 13
Pentameter line, 175
Phrasing in blank verse, 198, 218
Phrasing, 73, 191
"Poulters measure," 31
Prose rhythm, 50
Prose and verse, differences between, 53

Quadruple rhythm, 33
Quality of syllables, 25
Quantity, 25
Quatrain, heroic, 151
Quatrains, 145
Quintain, 154

Refrain lines, 100
Repetition, 97
Rhymeless words, 86
Rhythm, imitative, 206
Rhythm, Professor Gummere's definition of, 17
Rhythms, duple-triple, 296
Rhythmical prose, 56
Rime, 82
Rime, emphasis through, 86
Rime, internal, 88
Rime, royal, 157
Rime schemes, 88
Rime, tail, 89
Rime, uses of, 86
Rimes, imperfect, 84
Rondeau, 256
Rondel, 256
Rondelet, 265
Roundel, 256
Run-on lines, 185, 216

Scansion, 19
Sense perception, inaccuracy in, 8
Sestet, 223
Sestina, 263
Seven line stanzas, 157
Sexain, 155
Shepherd's calendar, 163
Short meter, 146
Short vowels, effect of, 127
Sibilants, 117
Six line stanza, 155
Sonnet, 222
Sonnet sequences, 226
Spenserian stanza, 159
Spondaic phrasing, 75, 77
Stanza forms, 139
Stanzas, two line, 142
Stanzas, three line, 143
Stress, definition of, 13

Subjectivity of movement, 72
Subjectivity of rhythm, 36, 41, 54, 67, 271
Syllables, changes in value of, 35
Syzygy, 114

Tercets, 143
Terza rima, 144
Tetrameter couplet, 102
Tetrameter, definition of, 13
Tetrameter, ten syllable, 177
Time parts, equality of, 8
Tone-color, 96
Trimeter, definition of, 13
Triolet, 260
Triple rhythm, 33, 275
Triple rimes, 83
Trisyllabic rimes, 91
Trochaic-dactylic movement, 71
Trochaic-dactylic verse, 302
Trochaic movement, 70
Trochaic phrasing, 75, 78
Trochaic verse, 266
Tumbling verse, 33, 163
"Tune," verse, 45

Unrimed lyrics, 82, 140

Vers libre, 65, 316
Versification, basis for study of, 4
Villanelle, 262
Virelay, 265
Vocalic words, 116
Vowel sequence, 122

Wavering stress, 203, 214

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

ENGLISH WORDS AND THEIR BACKGROUND
By GEORGE H. McKNIGHT

The many varied sources from which our words are drawn, and the changes they have undergone in the development of the language.

THE WRITING and READING of VERSE
By C. E. ANDREWS

Verse fundamentals and technique. The style and spirit of various verse forms discussed, with numerous examples.

THE BOOK OF THE SHORT STORY
Edited by ALEXANDER JESSUP and HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

Eighteen of the best examples of the short story, from all countries and all times, with explanatory and critical notes and lists of representative stories.

THE ALPHABET OF RHETORIC
By ROSSITER JOHNSON

Instructive and readable handbook, for constant use, giving special attention to correct speaking and writing in everyday intercourse.

THE ENGLISH GRAMMAR OF WILLIAM COBBETT
By ALFRED AYRES

Grammar in an unusual form, making it interesting to read and easy to learn without a teacher.

THE STORY OF THE ALPHABET
By EDWARD CLODD

The letters of our alphabet traced to their source. Describes the marvelous human achievement embodied in letters and the art of writing.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

New York **London**

APPLETON LIBRARY OF VERSE

These attractive books, uniformly bound, form a very distinctive group of volumes of some of the best-known verse of the day. The set covers a broad range of types of verse and moods. Other volumes will be added from time to time.

Narratives in Verse	By Ruth Comfort Mitchell
Noah An' Jonah An' Cap'n John Smith	By Don Marquis
The Wind in the Corn	By Edith Franklin Wyatt
Cape Cod Ballads	By Joseph C. Lincoln
Songs of the Stalwart	By Grantland Rice
From the Front	By C. E. Andrews
Songs in the Common Chord	By Amelia E. Barr
A Harvest of German Verse	By Margarete Munsterberg
Songs of the Soil	By Frank L. Stanton
Truth O' Women	By Josephine Daskam Bacon
Collected Poems	By Stephen Gwynn
Poems	By Camilla Doyle
The Home Road	By Martha Haskell Clark
In Earthen Bowls	By Nellie Burget Miller
A Harp in the Winds	By Daniel Henderson
Azrael and Other Poems	By Robert Gilbert Welsh
Selected Poems	By Charles Hanson Towne
American Mystical Verse	An Anthology by Irene Hunter
Honey Out of the Rock	By Babette Deutsch

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

New York London

A WIDE RANGE OF FINE VERSE

THE HOME ROAD
By MARTHA HASKELL CLARK

Charming poems of American home life. "Such poems as these have a permanent appeal to readers that love lilting song for its own sake, to hearts that love at once the open sky and the roofed-in fireside."—Curtis Hidden Page in the Preface. $1.25

POEMS OF LORD BYRON
Edited by H. J. C. GRIERSON

Extensive selections from Byron's best and most representative work, intended to preserve his chief characteristics as a poet, his tremendous power and vitality and quickly shifting intense and vivid moods. $4.00

BY BOG AND SEA IN DONEGAL
By ELIZABETH SHANE

Poetry which expresses the rich, true Irish humor and whimsicality, the devotion, the romanticism, and the spirit of half melancholy which characterize human nature in Donegal. Illustrated with photographs. $1.25

FROM THE SONG OF FRANCE
Selected and Translated by GRACE WARRACK

The entire range of French poetry, from the oldest carols and the songs of the Troubadours down to the verse of to-day, is represented in this beautiful collection. The original verse and the translation appear on opposite pages. Illustrated. $2.50

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

New York **London**

VARIED AND ATTRACTIVE VERSE

THE SHEPHERD'S WEEK

By JOHN GAY. Edited by H. T. B. BRETT-SMITH

A collection of satirical verses by the author of "The Beggar's Opera." Gay's keen wit plays on the conventional sentimentalities of his day regarding rural life, and also on the real traits and foibles of country people as he knew them. $1.50

THE BUTTERFLIES OF TAIWAN AND OTHER FANTASIES

By JANET B. MONTGOMERY McGOVERN

A volume of poems on Japanese themes. The author, from intimate and unusual acquaintance with Japanese life and character, writes poignantly and beautifully on the qualities and customs which seem strange to Occidental readers. $1.25

POEMS OF WALES

By A. G. PRYS-JONES

Old Welsh legends, the rugged beauty of the hills and the staunch spirit of the people of Wales stand out in these lovely lyric poems, in which the author has expressed much of the spirit and traditions of his land. $1.25

BY HAUNTED STREAMS. An Anthology of Modern English Verse

Edited by L. A. G. STRONG

Represents the picked work of more than fifty English poets writing at the present time, includes all types of verse, and strikingly and interestingly displays the present scope and trend of English poetry. $1.50

FROM ISLES OF THE WEST TO BETHLEHEM

Selected by GRACE WARRACK

Poetry, pictures, tales and runes gathered from all Christian lands from the Hebrides to Palestine, displaying the singing beauty of the Christian religious faith. Christmas legends and the Christmas spirit are emphasized. $2.50

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

New York **London**

HIEBERT LIBRARY
3 6877 00132 1040

DATE DUE

SEP 29 '87
DE31'95
OC18'97
OC 17 '01

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

808.1
A565
W0

UPLAND COLLEGE LIBRARY
UPLAND, CALIFORNIA

808.1
A565
W

Andrews, Clarence Edward

The writing and reading of verse.

22988